

Religious Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

The multi-religiousness and multiple religious communities of Bosnian and Herzegovina society have always pointed to a coexistence that has developed naturally. In a way it still does. At the same time this is also what segregates the three main ethnic groups most, especially after the last war, 1992-95.

In this study I am focusing on religious education among pupils in primary and comprehensive schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main intention of this study is to show the way in which religious education is organized and how the subject is communicated to the children. This is done by analysing and comparing religious education textbooks of the three main religions in the country, namely Islam, Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity, but also by looking at public debate around this subject.

This will hopefully provide answers to the question that I am asking in this study; what is the problem with religious education in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Thanks

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Chapter 1: General introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction

Bosnia and Herzegovina. A country with a multicultural heritage, a place where East meets West, a nation defined by post-war challenges. For centuries, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been influenced, led and shaped by various political orientations. From the Ottoman Era (1463-1878), through the periods of Austro-Hungarian rule (1878-1918), the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941) and the Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia (1945-1992), the somewhat changing territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina has found itself in the middle of wars and tensions throughout many generations. The historically shifting rule has not only made Bosnia and Herzegovina one of the most multicultural environments in Europe, but the fact that the country is a melting pot for religions and ethnicities has also been used as a foundation for segregation within the country's current borders. In particular during the war from 1992-1995, but also in today's society.

Still heavily defined by the aftermaths of the war in the 1990's, which ended on the 14th December 1995 as a result of the signing of the Dayton-agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently a state which is governed on the basis of division. To name a few; the state is divided into the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (also referred to as FBiH) and Republika Srpska (also referred to as RS); the presidency is governed by a rotational system as there are always three candidates, each representing one of the three main ethnic groups in the country: Bosniaks, Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs; there are three official languages spoken in the country: Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian, and the educational system is based on the ethnic affiliation of the pupils i.e. their belonging one of the three constituencies. In practical terms, this means that even though Ana and Sara are neighbours, both 12 years old and both have the same hobby; they don't necessarily go to the same classes, have the same teachers or learn the same things.

Acknowledging that education has a profound impact on integration and mutual understanding, this study is focused on religious education among pupils in primary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter also BiH). The main intention of this study is therefore to illustrate how religious teaching is organized, and what is communicated to the children, as

well as to discuss the significance and impact of such an approach. With this intention in mind I will try to answer the following questions:

First of all: What is the problem with religious teaching in primary and comprehensive schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina? Secondly: To what extent does this further complicate the relationship between the three main constituencies?

This will be done mainly by analysing and comparing religious textbooks of the three main religions in the country, namely Islam, Catholicism and the Orthodox Church. Through this study I will try to throw light on what I consider to be an attempt at deceiving the population: namely that religious education is being used in Bosnia and Herzegovina to segregate even more an already deeply divided population -contrary to what religious leaders are claiming. They are continuously repeating that religious teaching and practicing religion is one of the basic human rights, whereas this argument in reality is promoted to support even further division. In this study the intention is to explain and prove that the manner in which religious education is presented to the children and learnt by them has a segregating effect on the children. With a belief that religious leaders and religious teachers should realize that they are the ones with the power and responsibility to communicate this subject in respectful and human way, I aim to discuss the impact religious education has. Religion should from a normative perspective be about tolerance and respect for all people, including people of different faiths, as neighbours and countrymen. In most instances this is not the case in BiH.

1.2 Significance of the study

The multi-religious Bosnian and Herzegovinian society always considered religious coexistence as a normal state of affairs, and in a way it still does. At the same time religion is also what segregates the three main ethnic groups, especially after the last war. The complexity of politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina represents the main obstacle for the country to function properly. A deep division defines the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ethnic nationality is viewed as very important as it is intertwined in many aspects of people's lives. In this perspective one could argue that Bosnia and Herzegovina is becoming more and more a two-national state.

After the first multi-party elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1990 came the demand about introducing religion to public schools. Throughout the twentieth century, religious

education reflected political changes. Religion went from being the main value system to being an enemy during the communist period, when it was to be expelled together with teachers who taught it. Just before, during and after the last war, borderlines between different ethnic groups were brought forward, and national awareness grew stronger and stronger. Religion, history and language became the main grounds for difference between the ethnic groups. In reality, language differences are very tiny, and though the three ethnic groups have a different view on history, religion is what separates them the most. This could be one of the reasons why it was extremely important to introduce religious teaching to the schools. The law was justified on the basis of respect for human rights and the assumption that the former system was discriminatory because it didn't allow for religious teaching in schools. So in 1994, during the war, religion was introduced as a mandatory subject for the first time in the schools on the territory of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was at the time under control of the Bosnian Army. The same happened in Republika Srpska, just one year earlier, in 1993. Since then, there has been a continuous public debate about the role of religion and religious education in the educational system of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As previously described, religion is very present in today's Bosnian society and a field of great interest as religion plays a complex role in the relationship between the country's three constituencies, not the least as this division is also mirrored politically, which I will later explain in Chapter 2. During my Bachelor degree and for my final course, I wrote in general about the educational system of BiH. I found out that three subjects are causing debate and disagreement among religious leaders and historians in media headlines. Those three subjects are language, history and religion. The purpose of this thesis is to provide an overview of how religious education is organized in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as to analyse and compare the textbooks and to see how religious education is contributing to the social tolerance or non-tolerance, stereotypes and prejudices. In the end I will look at public discussions about the subject as religion as a topic is closely linked to the current political situation and religious intolerance in the country

Discussions and conflicts about religion and education are often heated, lacking a deeper understanding, and politically or emotionally loaded which again calls for strong opinions and views about the issue which frame both the politics and the practice. The questions are many, and so are the statements. The following statements are examples of what can be seen in the newspapers; "Religion and church/mosque don't belong in public schools", "Religious

education is indoctrination”, “Religion must be a part of education if we want our society to be able to deal with moral crisis of today’s youth”, “Human rights conventions and international educational standards are sufficient to steer national politics about religion education”, “Parents and families are responsible for personal religious or spiritual development of a child, not schools”, “It is necessary to teach about different main religions in schools in order to increase tolerance and social cohesion” and so on. These and other statements are motivated by different questions, which we can often hear in continuous debates and read about in the papers. Questions like “Do religious institutions have interest in democracy, social changes and education system in itself?”, “Should children of different religions be taught together or separately, and should the subject be compulsory?”, “How can we evaluate if content and method of specific form of teaching are creating indoctrination?”, “Is there research that can show us that teaching about different religions truly increases tolerance in pupils and how can we achieve this?” and so on. There are no simple answers and often it seems that there are no answers at all that can satisfy all three of Bosnia’s groups simultaneously.

Faced with a challenging future, starting from the absence of alternatives for children who do not wish to attend religious classes, the choice of alternative subjects is limited, inconsistent and children who opt out are often left without supervision. There is also the lack of transparency and accountability. On paper, the state as well as religious authorities supervises religious education, but in practice religion is treated differently from other subjects. The “sensitivity of the subject” is often used argument to justify this, and it seems that politicians don’t have the will to agree on the matter and there is a diversity of opinions on how things should be functioning. Last but not least there is the lack of any systematic approach by the authorities at all levels to ensure that religious instruction or religious education is offered in a manner that promotes tolerance and mutual respect and understanding. Returnees also face obstacles in certain areas when trying to realize their right to religious education, and have to deal with the presence of inappropriate school names and symbols, including those with a religious connotation. There have also been cases where religious leaders pressure school authorities. However, religious education is widely perceived, by parents in particular, as a positive subject. Very often it is seen as the only subject that teaches their children “some moral behaviour “. Religious education, more than any other school subject, has been a subject of conflict. Its reception has ranged from rejection to hope, and it has the power to consolidate or uproot a socio-political system.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Theory

A method can be defined as an approach or working process. It gives an answer to a question. By using the quantitative method, a researcher is collecting facts that are expressed with the help of numbers. On the other side, by using the qualitative method one gains a more general description of the subject. Qualitative and quantitative method can be used independently or together.¹ Which method a researcher uses depends on problem as it presents itself.

I chose religious education school textbooks as my main material: three textbooks for Islamic religious education, three textbooks for Orthodox religious education and three textbooks for Catholic religious education. Through the qualitative approach, in the form of text analysis and picture analyses, I will go into the depth of the content of these school textbooks to examine and illustrate how religious education is contributing in nation making and segregation.

2.1 Different methods

By using the quantitative method, a researcher can evaluate material from quantifiable phenomena, which can be translated into numbers. It is then possible to find systematic correlations with the help of for instance statistics. Information, which often is presented in tables or graphs, can be derived from the material.² The researcher has a certain distance to the data which is produced, and the results can give a statistic, generalizing answer to the problem as presented. With quantitative content analysis, the text is therefore being evaluated according to a structured scheme of categories, where the researcher through the analysis registers how many units can be placed in each category.³ The example of a text unit, in the use of quantitative content analysis, can be a statement or an article. The units and categories chosen define what is being analysed and what information is gained from the data.

When the qualitative method is used, the researcher can go more directly and in-depth to the core of the material. The material is examined by choosing fewer objects for analysis. The method can contribute with a deeper insight and understanding of a subject or a phenomenon. If one wants to do profound analysis that cannot be quantified, then it is suitable to use this

¹ Grønmo, (1982:95-97)

² Østbye, (2002:157-158)

³ Grønmo, (1982:98)

method.⁴ Qualitative method gives the researcher a descriptive, overall and coherent data to improve the understanding of a phenomenon. One has to be aware of subjectivity as an important element when it comes to this method.⁵ The reason for this is that researcher will more or less be influenced by his own values and norms since he or she has an opinion and understanding of the material before the analysis begins. However, by presenting the information systematically and describe the way in which the material was collected, analysed and interpreted, the reader will get the opportunity to make an interpretation on her own. In this way, the reliability of the analysis can be strengthened.⁶

Reliability pertains to the accuracy and consistency of the processed data within the chosen method.⁷ Validity, on the other hand, is about the selection of the material to be analysed, whether the right set of data has been selected, whether the analysis has the data-foundation necessary to generate the answers relevant for the study. Validity is about what exactly the researcher is measuring, whether the researcher answers his or her question, the relevance between the problem as presented and the results that are generated.

2.1.1 Use of Method

There are many different ways to study a phenomenon or to approach the problem as presented. Because of the nature of the problem, I am going to base my study on the qualitative method.

Quantitative method alone was never an option, although I was considering a combination of the two. I am perfectly aware that a combination of those two methods would give more valid results. I could, for instance, have made interviews with pupils, teachers and religious leaders, and then performed quantitative analysis based on these. However, I realized it would not be practically achievable for me, since I live in Norway and am not able to travel to BiH and stay there for longer periods of time. On the other hand, I made several shorter trips where I collected information, books and the schoolbooks I needed.

I am originally from BiH and speak Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian fluently, and this gave me some other good options: I could, for instance, search for and find a great deal of data by myself, and read and interpret it on my own without any trouble. I established contacts with informants and sources from the region, who describe to me how they, as insiders, interpret

⁴ Østbye et.al (2002:275)

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Bergström og Boréus, (2005:35)

⁷ Østbye et.al (2002:119)

the situation. I have also contact with several teachers in elementary schools. In this way I get a large number of different opinions about the subject, and it is indeed easier to get the whole picture when looking at the problem from different angles. It is also helpful to be able to read both Latin and Cyrillic letters to handle the whole breadth of data for my theses.

As I mentioned before, the main intention of this study is to investigate how religious education is organized, and what impact it has society. This will be done by comparing religious textbooks, upon which I am going to apply textual and visual analysis. I am aware that in these sorts of analysis the scholar is not considered to be objective. This however does not mean that the scholar has to be biased, but he has to understand that he is biased by nature. My background and with that my prior knowledge about the subject could be considered an issue to some readers, and some may think that I am most probably biased and prejudiced. In my defence, I can say that I come from a mixed marriage and am a mix of all three ethnic groups in BiH: my mother is Muslim, and my father is from a Serb-Croat marriage. I guess that for some readers this information in itself would be enough to conclude that I am biased in a certain direction. In that case the question can be raised, would not those readers be biased or prejudiced themselves by thinking like that? I feel that my background is highly positive when it comes to this study because I feel that I do not belong to any of the three “sides”. I was raised to respect all religions and religious persons, but I am against abusing religion for political purposes, and using it to separate people. Neither during the war nor today could I declare myself as belonging to one of those three ethnic groups. I always felt Bosnian, and I still do. Today it is impossible to declare oneself as Bosnian, in population censuses. One can declare oneself only as Bosniak, Serb or Croat. If someone feels like me, *Bosnian*, then he or she belongs to a minority of citizens of BiH today, and automatically comes under the category *Others*, because *Bosnian* obviously does not exist as one of the options.

2.2 Material

How one interprets religion and sacred books depends on who is doing the interpreting. The religious Communities in BiH are responsible for writing and publishing school textbooks for religious education, and obviously they are the ones who get to interpret religion and present it to the children. They are presenting their own view of religion in the school textbooks, and in this way they are setting the norms for how religion is perceived.

After the school year 2009/2010 there is some change, however, when it comes to where one can acquire religious education textbooks. Before this, one could buy all textbooks for religious education in regular bookstores right before the school start, but now I had to go to churches and mosque to buy the books. I found this out on my study trip to Sarajevo. I bought Islamic and Catholic religious books in Sarajevo, in the Federation, while the books for Orthodox religious education I bought in Eastern Sarajevo, in Republika Srpska. Religious education textbooks are published by the religious institutions.

To try to secure breadth and depth in the analysis of school textbooks for religious education, textbooks for two different grades, third and eighth, were chosen as part of the data for Islamic, Orthodox and Catholic religious education. To look at Orthodox religious education, I chose the textbook for fourth grade, since the third grade textbook was sold out. Neither the textbooks for second or the first grade could be found, so I had to buy the textbook for the fourth grade. Therefore this textbook will be compared with the Islamic and Catholic textbooks for the third grades. In this chapter I will just give a presentation of the school textbooks and not the analysis. Analysis will be done in chapter V.

In the case of Catholicism I am going to analyse textbooks for the third and eighth grade. The Title of the textbook for the third grade is "*At the table of love and reconciliation*".⁸ It is issued by *Kriscanska sadasnjost, Zagreb – Sarajevo*, 2008, has 96 pages and it is written by Ivica Pazin and Ante Pavlovic. The title of the textbook for eighth grade is "*With Christ through the life*".⁹ This textbook was published in 2007 by the same publisher, has 183 pages and is written by Josip Peris, Sabina Maruncic, Mirjana Vucica and Dusan Vuletic.

In the case of Orthodox textbooks, they have one and the same title, which is "*Orthodox Religious Teaching*", and are written in Cyrillic script. The textbook for the fourth grade is written by Hrizostom Jevic, who is a bishop, it has 54 pages and it was published by *Katihetski odbor, Banja Luka*, 2009. The textbook for the eighth grade is written by Veljko Stojanovic, who is a priest, it has 46 pages and was issued by the publisher mentioned above in 2006.

When it comes to Islamic textbooks, they as well have the same title, which is simply "*Religious Teaching*". The textbook for the third grade is written by Mina Pleh, Muamer

⁸ Original title: "Za stolom ljubavi i pomirenja"

⁹ Original title: "S Kristom u zivot"

Tinjak and Melika Nezirovac. It has 169 pages and was published in Sarajevo, in 2008 by El-Kalem – Publishing Centre Assembly of Islamic Community in BiH¹⁰. The textbook for the eighth grade is written by Sevko Sulejmanovic and Esmā Kapetanovic. It has 200 pages and was published in Sarajevo in 2005, as an extended edition, by the same publisher.

Data for this study is collected from documents and participant observation. The main sources are written sources, primarily books and material found on the web. Books are mainly historical books, scientific literature and regulations for the education system. When it comes to web data, these are primarily web editions from newspapers and magazines, but also from the sites of different organizations, government agencies and NGOs.

I used several books of Anthony D. Smith in my theoretical background concerning nationalism, but I also used some other important authors. Those are Svein Mønnesland, Ivo Banac and Vjekoslav Perica. I feel that those authors are the most important when it comes to the theory of nationalism, and nationalism in Balkans. I used these same authors in defining and explaining concepts such as nation, national identity, ethnicity and religion, and what they mean in Bosnian context.

The results of studies depend on the collection and treatment of data. Data has to be valid and reliable. Throughout the process, I have tried hard to be critical towards the data, especially towards web data. I was always asking the question whether the data was relevant or not for the study. I collected my data by reading books, textbooks, papers, magazines, and web pages: sources which I in advance had reason to believe were relevant for my study. By closely studying references I identified further relevant material. I have also found material by contacting a number of teachers in BiH, who instructed me where and whom to turn to. Religious textbooks were quite full of pictures. Some of them I found very interesting. Therefore I included them in the chapter V, where I analysed them as well. In this way the reader gets a more complete feel for the material. I felt that pictures were an important part of textbook analysis since they were a illustrations of the texts, and presumably were there with a purpose.

Observation as a method of collecting data was quite relevant in this study, both participant and non-participant, because they gave me information of great value about people's thoughts, views, opinions, about double standards, and last but not least, fear and hatred towards each other. This is another reason why I made several study trips to BiH.

¹⁰ El-Kalem – izdavački centar Rijaseta Islamske zajednice u Bosni i Hercegovini

The problem as presented in this study, requires descriptive, qualitative, answers, to shed light on how religious education is used in the game of power, as a political instrument to separate and divide ethnic groups even more from each other, so that the political elites can maintain their domination and continue to rule their own part of the country.

2.3 Organization of the study

This study is divided into six chapters.

Chapter I is a general introduction to the study and presents the intentions and aims of the study.

Chapter II covers methodology and theory. In this study the theory of nationalism will be applied. I will look closer at concepts such as *nation*, *national identity*, *ethnicity* and *religion*. The concepts will be presented and it will be explained what they mean in a Bosnian context.

Chapter III covers the historical background, which is important if we want to understand the complexity of religious education within an already disintegrating educational system.

Chapter IV briefly describes the religious education systems in BiH through history, from the establishment of the first schools under the Ottoman era to the present day.

Chapter V deals with the analysis of nine religious education textbooks for the school year 2009/2010. To make it most representative, I chose textbooks for third and eighth grade. I made a decision not to analyse more books, since I believe it would be too much. The weight will be put on what students are being taught and how the subject is presented and communicated to them.

Chapter VI will present the conclusions of the study.

2.4 Theory

Nationalism and religion play an important part in Bosnian history. They have been interwoven in every segment of people's lives throughout the centuries, and this is still the case today, maybe more than ever. That is why I in this chapter will define, clarify and

discuss theory of nationalism and the concepts of nation, national identity, ethnicity and religion, in the context of BiH.

Even though my study is not about language, I choose to mention the language situation in BiH, since it is relevant for my study when it comes to segregation and nationalism. Although there are three recognized languages in BiH in official use; Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian, they are only different in names. If we exclude the political aspect and only look at Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian language within the territory of BiH, then there is no doubt that it is one language and not three different languages. The problem is that this typologically identical language is standardized in three different ways. According to Prof. Dr. Branko Tosovic, professor of Slavonic linguistics in the Institute for Slavic studies at the “Karl Franz” University in Graz, there is one standard for Serbian language, a second standard for Croatian language and a third standard for Bosnian language. There are political efforts on all three sides to affirm the separate nations with the help of language.¹¹

The only difference between the three nations in BiH is religion, which defines the nation, i.e. if you are Catholic, then you are a Croat, if you are Orthodox, then you are a Serb, and if you are Muslim then you are a Bosniak. The last war only entrenched religious awareness as the baseline of national identity and the key difference separating the nations in BiH. The war itself began because of aggressive ethno-confessional mobilization that brought the nations back towards the religious traditions. Religious communities were considered as proven anti-Communists. The Serbian Orthodox Church imposed itself as the anchor of Serbian national existence in BiH and clearly stood behind SDS.¹² The same happened with the Catholic Church, which in the 1980s tried to affirm itself as the one and only defender of Croatian national interest, and it supported HDZ.¹³ The Islamic community did the same, and unambiguously supported the SDA.¹⁴ It is then clear that the religious communities in BiH played quite an important political role, something they also do today.¹⁵

The mobilization of nationalism, especially during the period before the last war, resulted in an unprecedented degree of polarization, and almost to the disintegration of the country. My

¹¹ http://www.zurnal.info/home/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6161:karikatura-jezika-se-pretvorila-u-nau-realnost&catid=45:interview&Itemid=31

¹² Srpska demokratska stranka (Serbian Democratic Party)

¹³ Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (Croatian Democratic Community)

¹⁴ Stranka demokratske akcije (

¹⁵ <http://www.fes.ba/publikacije/201104-CIPEK-Evropski-identitet-i-religija.pdf> - p.2

attitude towards this fact in this study is that this disintegration is now partly entrenched in schools, and especially during the religious education lessons.

Before I started my research I asked several questions about the importance of religious education in BiH. Why is it so important for the religious communities to have religious education in elementary schools? Is it because people are so religious in BiH? The answer here is “no”. There is a difference between religion and the religiousness of the population. The concept of religion is about organisation, idea-systems and practice, while religiousness is more about personal faith and piety.

The second question I asked is: “Is it important to the religious communities because freedom of religion is one of fundamental freedoms guaranteed by human rights and?” The answer to this question is also “no”. Guaranteed rights are just one excuse the religious communities use to protect and justify religious education in state schools. They are often referring to the communist and socialist period under Tito when religion was banned from schools and public life.

The third question I asked was: “Is religious education then important to preserve nationalism within every respective nation in Bosnia?” I choose to answer “yes” to this question, because only religion separates three main nations of BiH: Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. In everything else they are similar.

Religious communities are well aware of the role they play. Therefore it is very important for them to have religious education in state schools. Religious education has become a political tool whose task is to segregate children along national line. The aim is to shape the identity of the three nations and create clear distinctions between Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox with the help of religious education based on nationalism. In the light of this fact, I choose to apply theory of nationalism. I am now going to look closer at concepts such as *nation*, *national identity*, *ethnicity* and *religion* and see what they mean in a Bosnian context.

2.4.1 Nation, Nationalism, National Identity and Religion

According to Smith “Nationalism is a political ideology which involves a strong identification of a group of individuals with a political entity defined in national terms, i.e. *a nation*.”¹⁶

There are many different definitions of the concept *nation*. One way to define nation is to

¹⁶ Smith, (1993:71)

define it through criteria like language, tradition and religion. The other way is based on peoples feeling of belonging to a certain community. The last definition comes from the idea that certain common features exist, like common cultural heritage and common values as well as a wish to create an ambitious future together.¹⁷

According to one view, four necessary criteria to define a "nation" are common language, united territory, economic activity and a common culture. This idea of a nation is the one that stood out in Central and Eastern Europe. The Western European and American tradition use the term *nation* in a political context, about states. That is why in English, the word *nation* stands for both "people" and "state". This Western European definition was derived from the French Revolution in 1789 where the idea was that the "nation" should consist of all French citizens. On the other side was the German tradition, based on Romanticism, where common culture was the main component of the term "nation". The German nation was living spread out in many small states during that period, and it was a common culture that united them and not common state borders. Exactly this German tradition became predominant in Eastern Europe, where many nations were subjects in great empires. While it sounds simple and straightforward that a "nation" had to be built on common culture, it was however not clear which criteria, which traits should be taken into consideration when declaring that a culture was indeed a common one.¹⁸

The term "nation" requires the construction of an ideal type as well, based on the visions of the nationalists, and processes like myth making, memory selection, territorialisation and cultural unification and such. According to Anthony D. Smith, "nation" is

...a named human population occupying a historic territory and sharing common myths and memories, a public culture, and common laws and customs for all members.¹⁹

Ivo Banac states that nations and states generally have common territories, but their borders are not necessarily the same. Furthermore he says that nations must not be confused with states and that the term *nation-state* is often misused and makes sense only if the territory of a nation is equal to the territory of the state. However, some nations can be split among several minority-free states like in the case of the Germans, as mentioned above. Banac is not defining term "nation" by political criteria. What is crucial for him are cultural attributes, most importantly language. A single nation cannot be multilingual, but a single language may

¹⁷ Mønnesland, (1999:14-15)

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 15

¹⁹ Smith, (2003:24)

be shared by two or more nations. Language is important to national identity, so it is not surprising that shaping the national language is the first priority of nationalism. Besides the cultural criteria there have to be historical premises as well. Every nation is a product of a particular historical development.²⁰

In his book "Razmatranje o porijeklu sirenja nacionalizma: *Nacija: Zamisljena zajednica*," Benedict Anderson "...recognizes the nation as a political construction of the modern epoch, where mass media helps to create acceptance of name, symbols and myths about national belonging." He talks about the nation as an "imaginary" community. According to him, a nation is made out of many people who do not know each other and are never going to meet, and because of this they only "imagine" they are a community. He concludes that one does not necessarily have to belong, there is also the option of not belonging. Every belonging is thus imaginary i.e. human illusion.²¹

Bosnia acted as a mould that produced three nationalities that were at one and the same time very different from and similar to each other, alternately antagonistic and cooperative, at once Bosnian and outwards-looking in their orientation. The Bosnian Serbs were both Bosnian and Serbian, the Bosnian Croats both Bosnian and Croatian, and Bosnian Muslims both Bosnian and Ottoman or Islamic. These dualities have determined the shape of each of the three national movements up to this day. However we can say that religion is the determinant of nationality in Bosnia. This is the result of the segregation of the Ottoman state along religious lines, so that each national movement was the result of the role each respective religious community had played. Three large religions meet in Bosnia, the Catholicism, the Orthodoxy and Islam. Since people were organized after religion it was not until the 19th century that language became important for national identity. In Bosnia Serbs, Croats and Muslims speak the same language, but they belong to three different nations because of religion. " "Religion" in Bosnia does not only signify faith and dogma, but is to a large extent connected with culture and mentality. "Religion" thus encompasses many sides of people's lives, from the everyday ones to the most significant. Based on persons first names one can in most cases determine a person's religious affiliation, and thus which culture and nation the person belongs to."²²

²⁰ Banac, (1984: 22-23)

²¹ Anderson, (1990:9),

²² Mønnesland, (1999:16-17)

It is often quite apparent that there is a link between nationalism and religion. It is therefore important to define the basic concepts of nationalism and religion. The problem is that the term “nationalism” in itself has a variety of definitions. It is commonly used in several meanings, especially to refer to sentiments, on the one hand, and on the other hand to ideologies and movements. In order to frame the perspective of this particular study, I will define nationalism according to A.D. Smith as:

An ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity, and identity on behalf of a population some of whose members deem it to constitute an actual or potential “nation.”²³

National autonomy, national unity and national identity are the most important ideals and goals of nationalist movements, and together with “authenticity” they provide the main concepts of the language or discourse of nationalism. Nationalism as a political principle is about national and political unity being concurrent. This means that a nation has to have its own state. Nationalism as a political movement is a product of the 19th century and the whole point of national movements is to promote a national idea. National movements during this period were often led by a well-educated elite who had the nation’s progress in mind. Historian Miroslav Hroch defined three phases of modern national movements, which especially suits small European nations. First comes a cultural phase with interest for language, culture, tradition and history, which was led by a group of “awakened” intellectuals, as Hroch calls them. In the second phase, the scholars’ ideas are communicated by a group of “patriots”. These were the carriers of national ideologies, and were often a group of path-breakers for “the national idea”. In the last phase, the national program wins, becomes a political movement and reaches its “mass apogee”.²⁴

National movements flourished in Eastern Europe in the 19th century, as a reaction to national suppression under foreign control. The national pioneers’ mission was to restore the nation’s glory. It was important to show that once upon a time the nation had possessed large territories, in order to prove that the nation had deep roots in that same territory. Some nations united themselves with other nations, in order to show how great they were. A special national movement emerged in Central Europe during the 19th century, namely *panslavism*. This movement aimed to unite all the Slavic people by recognizing a common ethnic background among the different Slav groups, in order to achieve common cultural and political goals.

²³ Smith, (2003:24)

²⁴ Banac, (1984:28)

Gradually, this movement was replaced by other separate national movements. In the process of nation building the main thing is to create a common national consciousness, language, national institutions and so on. It is very important to make the nation look as homogeneous as possible, to erase regional differences and to unite different cultures.²⁵

Nationalism is thus, a very important tool, which helps to create nations. According to Gellner;

“Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist – but it does need some pre-existing differentiating marks to work on, even if, as indicated, these are purely negative...”²⁶

However, nationalism has two sides, both a positive and a negative one. The positive side of nationalism plays an important role in cultural and political liberation, i.e. patriotism.

Patriotism doesn't have to be a negative quality, as long as it doesn't have a detrimental impact on the others. The negative side of nationalism comes from the need for self-assertion, which often arises in difficult political or financial times. Characteristics of discriminating nationalism can be politics of territorial expansion or discrimination of minorities. When the nation feels endangered, nationalism becomes a kind of defence mechanism. This negative nationalism arises when one national political program, which is supposed to promote one nation's interests, negatively affects another nation's interests. Because it is not possible for all to create their own national state on the same territory, or for one national program to incorporate a territory that other nations also consider their own, conflict between two or more nationalisms in countries where two or more nations live side by side can arise.²⁷

Crucial to the subsequent history of the Bosnian national movements were two social contrasts. One was between the Christian and the Muslim population, while the other was between the urban and the rural population. National consciousness in Bosnia and Herzegovina was born in the towns and among the members of each of the three nationalities. It possessed a Bosnian character that was ready to embrace members of the other groups. Yet the ethno-religious “pure” character of the villages ultimately imposed its stamp on the national movements, ensuring that they would be unable to bridge the religious divide.

²⁵ Mønnesland, (1999:22)

²⁶ Smith, (1991:71)

²⁷ Mønnesland, (1999:23)

The nationalities of Bosnia and Herzegovina grew out of the religious communities of Ottoman Bosnia. The concept of national identity as A.D. Smith defines it is:

...the maintenance and continual reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions that form the distinctive heritage of the nation and the identification of individuals with that heritage and its pattern.²⁸

What we mean by national identity includes some perception of political community, which in turn suggests at least some common institutions and a single code of rights and duties for every member of the community. A national identity is fundamentally multi-dimensional and cannot be reduced to a single element or easily induced in a population by forced means.²⁹ In other words;

“...nation must have a measure of common culture and a civic ideology, a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas, that bind the population together in their homeland. The task of ensuring a common public, mass culture has been handed over to the agencies of popular socialization, notably the public system of education and the mass media.”³⁰

Smith sees national identity as a “construction of situation”, which is directed toward mass political mobilization. He talks about multiply identities, where every identity is based on social classification and it is possible to change them or even to abolish them. In this sense national identity is multidimensional and dependent on other collective identities such as class-identity, religious identity or ethnic identity. Smith especially stresses the very close relation between national and religious identity. He also speaks about how identities slide into and out of each other and how they often overlap one another. However, it is very important to remember that the two clearly differ from one another.³¹

National identity implies both cultural and political identity, so we can distinguish between the territorial type of political nation and the ethnical type of political nation. The first type of political nations are those that were created “from above”, by using the strong state where aristocratic elites impose their project on the lower classes. The second kinds are the nations build up from “below”. These are made with the help from narrow circles of intellectuals whose aim it is to mobilize wider social classes into a politicized nation, using cultural means

²⁸ Smith, (2003:24-25)

²⁹ Smith, (1991:9)

³⁰ Ibid., p.11

³¹ Smith, (1998:20)

like language, faith, rituals and ethno-history. All three nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina belong to the second type of nations.³² This approach can be used to explain what is happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina today, when it comes to the educational system and religious teaching in particular. All three nations are pursuing their own religion, their own pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and their own traditions through the educational system, and in this way they are making their own national identity, which separates them more and more from one another. The result of this is that we have two nations within Bosnia and Herzegovina who do not feel a sense of belonging, nor political affiliation with the country they live in, but with neighbouring Serbia or Croatia.

A nation's most important cultural resources and traditions are formed by "ethnicity" and "religion". It is important to remember that religious beliefs and practices are rarely divorced from ethnic traditions. Modernization processes developed two approaches to the phenomenon of relation between religion and nation. Because of this, we can distinguish between the secular and anti-secular approach. The secular approach is about secularization of society i.e. relocating of religion into the private sphere and its subjectivization. Still, in Europe one could not notice a decrease of religiousness, but rather a weakened loyalty towards the church. In the process of expelling religion, secularization has underestimated its social importance. Thus a vacuum was created in modern societies, which only religion can fill with its content.

Already from the 1970s, secular theory is marked as a scientific myth and a "return to the sacred" is announced. Advocates of the secular paradigm were trying to modify it. Such revision of the secular thesis points to two important elements. The first is the assertion that religiosity in a society grows stronger in situations when individuals and groups feel threatened and insecure. Some connect religious vitality with the role religion had through the history in preserving the national ethnos.³³ Anti-secular theory points to a connection between religion and nationalism in societies of late modernization. Such a comeback of religion into the public sphere is interpreted as a failure of secularization. Connecting religion with nation is also done by political elites, who manipulate masses to think of religious roots as elements of temporal culture. This is especially the case in multi-confessional societies in which ethnic, religious and political boundaries do not concur. There are many examples in the world where a religious component is reintroduced to the public sphere, for instance the Iranian revolution

³² Ibid., p. 194

³³ Banovac, (2007:23)

in 1979. Urs Altermatt believes that in the context of the global problems that we have today, where people are searching for the meaning of life, religion is achieving new possibilities for activity.³⁴ Anticipations that the significance of religion and nation would become a thing of the past are not realised, but their relation is getting modified according to the criteria and needs of the present. Those stressing the need to respect religious values, sometimes insists that the nation is the best framework to secure this, the nation having the necessary form of social organization. Strengthening religion does not imply a weakening of the nation, since religious believers appear to be the most faithful adherents of the national idea.

The secular idea is questioned also in the example of Yugoslavia, where in the end of the 1980s, people started to show signs of strong religious identity in the, until then, “atheist”-society. Nations are still very much dependent on religious institutions. The comeback of religion occurred through ethno-religious political structures, but also through religious institutions alone. The policy of reviving the social importance of religious institution we could refer to as ethno-religious. The comeback of religion into an already quite secularized society implied, in the Yugoslav context, a mass “reconstruction” or “revitalization” of the ethnic fundament of religion.³⁵

From the scientific standpoint one recognizes religion and nation as two fully separate phenomena, as two forms of cultural collective identity, which have to differ clearly from each other. Religious identity is unambiguous, while national identity may be a composite identity. Because of their many resemblances and identical elements, the two identities are often mistaken for being a single one. Religion achieves its integrated role through institutions, rituals, and religious awareness, while nation achieves its unity through tradition, customs, and culture as well as through the development of national awareness. Seeking to give an answer to the question of human existence, they are assuring personal and collective immortality; they perpetuate ethnic relations by preserving the memory of great-grandfathers, fallen soldiers and by imbuing their members with a sense of heroism. Religion has a role as a primary instigator behind the developing of national awareness. This is a common characteristic for all three nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, i.e. the Bosniaks, Serbian and Croatian.

The Balkan wars of the 1990s called attention to a centuries old problem in the region: a mixed population of different ethnic and religious origin and ambiguous cultural boundaries

³⁴ Altermatt, (1996:72)

³⁵ Vlaisavljevic, (2002:228)

makes it impossible to create culturally homogenous nation-states through peaceful division of territories. It became possible, however, at the price of bloody and destructive wars in the 1990s.³⁶

According to Vjekoslav Perica, nation-states cannot exist without history and myth. This demands accepting some narratives as “sacred”. Myth is a story about the origin i.e. birth of the community. This story is often historically inaccurate, but it nevertheless becomes sacred. In this way history becomes religion rather than history built on the accepted scientific standards of evidence.

Nations create myths, and myths create nations. The crucial difference between Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks is not religion, according to Perica, but rather the myth of national origins. This myth is exploited by native religious institutions.

Michael B. Petrovich points out that religion was not so much a matter of private conscience as of one’s public identity for the Yugoslav peoples. The identification between religion and nationality was in some cases so great, that a change of nationality was automatically entailed by religious conversion.³⁷

The Orthodox Churches of Eastern Europe have historically been connected with the ideology of nationalism, and have long been openly and actively involved in national politics. The Church was also cherished as the historic depository of nationhood, national values, and also as the saviour the nation’s existence. Nationality and religion melted together into a distinct Serbian faith, due to the Serbian Orthodox Church, which was a cultural and quasi-political institution that shaped and expressed the ethos of the Serbian people.

Church, state and ethnic community grew together in the Orthodox world. Under Ottoman rule, the Serbian Orthodox Church became a warrior-church, which tried to preserve ethnic identity, and fought for nationhood and statehood.

The Kosovo myth is the key element of Serbian nationalism and religion. The creation of the Serbian nation was helped by the cult of ethnic saints, rather than Orthodox theology. This cult is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Serbian Orthodoxy, but also a significant element of Serbian national identity. The Serbian Orthodox Church began worshipping of national saints systematically from the late sixteenth century. Until today they have canonized 76 saints, who were all ethnic Serbs, most of them Church leaders and clergy. However, there were also 22 rulers and statesmen, several peasants, and even six women.

³⁶ Perica, (2002:3-4)

³⁷ Ibid., p. 5

What is interesting is that during the communist period, the united Serbian Orthodox Church in Yugoslavia achieved its largest size ever, and was expanding and rebuilding its facilities nationwide until the breakup of Yugoslavia. Leaders of the Serbian Church, like leaders of other religious institutions, could travel freely abroad during the liberal phase of communism after the 1960s. All religious institutions were expanding and flourishing during this liberal period, but simultaneously the Serbian Church was also receiving Western financial aid as one of the churches persecuted by communists.³⁸

Unlike the Serbian "ethnic" church, which was always tied to the Serbian states, Catholicism in Croatia and the Croat-populated areas of BiH had a different development. Namely, the process of becoming an "ethnic" and "native" church began only in the second half of the nineteenth century and advanced steadily. As the Serbs honour their shrines in Kosovo and Serbia, the Croats, on their side, are proud of their artefacts and monuments from the era of the local Croatian rulers, which are to be found in Dalmatia.

Between the 1960s and 1980s, during the communist rule, Croatian Catholicism gained its historical peak in the level of its activities. The Catholic Church maintained 32 book publishers and two publishing houses in Yugoslavia. In addition, it had around 180 periodicals and religious newspapers, with a circulation of over seven hundred thousand.³⁹

When it comes to the Bosnian Muslim clergy, they showed more enthusiasm toward the establishment of a self-administered religious institution during Austrian rule. Both the Muslim Religious Organization and the Yugoslav Muslim Organization were supported by the Belgrade regime. At the same time, they were used as checks against Serbian and Croatian nationalism.

The Islamic Religious Community changed its name into "The Islamic Community" in socialist Yugoslavia, and rebuilt their organization. It was also established in all six Yugoslav republics and two provinces. Just like the two other religious communities, the Islamic Community also reached its largest size, with the greatest number of religious schools and mosques, in the history of the organization in this period.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 6-9

³⁹ Ibid., pp.9-11

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp.11-12

2.4.2 The Sacred and the Profane

Religion was characterized as "opium for the people" by Karl Marx. This criticism claims that religion obscures the material facts of reality. It provides justifications for economic exploitation of the weakest, while turning a blind eye to class division. However, religion also has a positive contribution to societal development, it provides meaning and identity.

Religious identity has a narrative dimension, which means it is created and maintained through stories.⁴¹ s. 38-42) Religion is also underlying the dividing lines between the people. "We" understand ourselves in contrast to "them" or "the others". "Them" and "the others" are outside our own group. This may not be the main intention of the religion, to establish differences, but it certainly is a by-product.⁴²

Today there are two different worldviews: one is secularized, the other religious. The secularized world does not gain its perception of reality from old traditions and revelation, but primarily from science, technology, economy, politics and art. In secularized society, religion is a source of thinking and inspiration also for people who are not religious. Still, religion is losing its former role in society, and is, also losing power and support. Because of this, religion has become private matter in large parts of Europe, i.e. it is not an obligation one accepts just because one is born into the religious tradition, but rather something one chooses. The individuals themselves choose which role religion will play in their life, and what religion will mean for them.

Religion was forced to adapt to the development of society in order to survive. There is nothing new in the fact that the majority of people in the world are religious. What is new, is that religion is much more visible in politics and media since 1990s.⁴³

This was the case in ex-Yugoslavia, where religion and religious communities had become deeply intertwined with politics since 1990s. In 1990 "A Belgrade newspaper publishes an interview with the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Germanus, in which this church leader says that the partition of Yugoslavia is inevitable and Serbs should establish a homogenous state of their own. He believes that peaceful partition is possible through Serbo-Croat negotiations that would also involve leaders of the Serbian Orthodox and Catholic churches."⁴⁴ Already in the period 1990-1991, "the Serbian orthodox Church in Croatia and BiH called local Serbs to arm themselves and rise to prevent genocide in order to avoid new

⁴¹ Sælid Gilhus and Mikaelsson, (2007:38-42)

⁴² Ibid., p. 54

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 17-21

⁴⁴ Perica, (2002:XXVI)

massacres of Serbs as occurred in the Independent State of Croatia during World War II.”⁴⁵

There are also the examples of the visibility of the Islamic community and the Catholic Church in politics as well.

According to Armina Omerika, an expert in Islamic studies, ”Ever since the Bosnian war, the Islamic community has supported a form of political nationalism in which ethnic national identity is equated with religious and political identity. Accordingly, alliances are repeatedly formed between the Islamic community and the various Bosniak (i.e., Bosnian Muslim) parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina that have a nationalist outlook.”⁴⁶

Theologian, Fr. Ivo Markovic, the professor of Franciscan theology in Sarajevo, once stated that national parties couldn’t exist without support from religious communities. According to him, the content of the national is above all, religious identity. All of the three nations in BiH have religious origins, and the amalgamation of the religious and the national is fundamental. Religious leaders are getting into the secular area, and help national parties, while at the same time politicians are manipulating with religion.⁴⁷

The main challenge today is religious diversity, that is, how religions interpret each other. Do they see each other as enemies or friends, as allies or rivals? On the one side there is a trend that invites dialogue. This is a trend built on mutual respect, where common features are emphasised. On the other side, however, is an approach leaning towards creating and maintaining an enemy, where the world and religions are being divided into good and evil, into true and false.⁴⁸ This last trend is the prevalent one in Bosnia today, where there are three different monotheistic religions, which are in a conflict with one another through the centuries.

There are usually two main theories regarding secularization among researchers. According to the first and the oldest one, religion has its strongest place where one religion is autocratic. A religion can weaken if its monopoly breaks down and several religious movements have to struggle for the attention. This provides a breeding ground for scepticism towards religious postulates in general, and as a result secularization occurs. According to the other theory, diversity does not weaken religion, but rather strengthens it. Here a parallel is drawn between religion and financial markets. When many different religions operate in a common market, it will lead to increased competition and more commerce, just like in economic markets. Since

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ <http://www.goethe.de/ins/ba/sar/ges/phi/bs5759105.htm>

⁴⁷ http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/most_religija_i_politika_markovic_dautovic/1853985.html

⁴⁸ Sælid Gilhus and Mikaelsson, (2007:18)

the offer is more varied, there will be more religion and more religiousness. In other words, there will be something for everybody.⁴⁹ I chose to use the second theory, which I feel is appropriate for a better understanding of this study, since BiH is a diverse country where religion is very strong positioned.

The concept of “religion” can be distinguished and contrasted according two kinds of definitions and approaches, according to Smith. One is *substantive* and the other is a more *functional* approach. The later one will be applied here, where religion is treated as a moral, or social, force:

...where a system of beliefs and practices that distinguishes the sacred from the profane and unites its adherents in a single moral community of the faithful.⁵⁰

Today we can distinguish between *the sacred* and *the profane* on three levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the first level we have a distinction between the three main religions, where each one is eternally treated as superior and more sacred compared to the other two. On my several study tours, religion and ethnicity were often brought up in conversations when I talked to people. Maybe not so much as the main topic, but it came up quite often to add or complete certain information about something or somebody. As a result of the last war, Serbs are regarded as vandals and barbarians, and their faith as blasphemous, since the war crimes has been supported and blessed by the church in some cases. The same goes for Croats but to some less extent, but Croats are considered to be sly.

On the other hand there has always been some kind of aversion towards the Muslims who were first officially recognized as a separate nation by Tito in the seventies. Muslims are generally considered as either Serbs or Croats who converted to Islam under Ottoman rule. Muslims were also standing in the way of the Serbian and Croatian dream of splitting Bosnia between them. One example from a book on social subjects for fourth grade in RS, which was in use in schools in 2001, has a chapter where the children are being asked if they have heard about the Serbian proverb: “Turks have no faith”. The term “Turks” is used as an insulting

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 22

⁵⁰ Smith, (2003:25-26)

name by Serbs to describe the Muslim population in Bosnia. Also the term *balija*⁵¹ is used in the same way.

The problem here is that people are being labelled, and we have generalizing tendencies on every side. The problem of being labelled, segregated and avoided is most problematic at schools, precisely because children are young, and don't understand the concept of nationalism and segregation and how complicated it is.

On the second level there is an internal distinction between *the sacred* and *the profane*. There is a division within each ethnic group, between the ones who are religious and those who are not, which leads toward internal differences between *us* and *them*, where those who are religious and let their children attend religious classes, believe that they are morally superior, and more conscientious and devoted citizens than "*the profane*" ones. The question here is how sacred those who give priority to "*the sacred*" actually are. It seems that for numerous people in Bosnia and Herzegovina religion means only accepting those specific things that suit them. Being religious in this way centres on presenting a child for baptism or circumcision, getting married in Churches and Mosques and not in a courthouse, celebrating Christmas, Easter and Eid and such. It is important to define religiousness in Bosnia before people make a distinction between each other based on religion and faith. What about those who don't belong to either of three major ethnic groups?

This brings us to the third level of distinction between *the sacred* and *the profane*. Here we have the division between the three major ethnic groups and those who are from ethnically mixed marriages, where persons are neither on one nor the other side. Those are in minority, but still they exist. Firstly, how are they supposed to declare their nationality when the option "*Bosnian and Herzegovinian*" doesn't exist? One can only be Bosniak, Croat, Serb or Other. Secondly, which religions are they to relate to, and which religious classes are they supposed to attend? And if they do choose one of them, are they betraying the other part of their background? Either way, they are doomed to be neither *the sacred* nor *the profane*.

⁵¹ The term is used as an insult to describe muslims from Bosnia in a derogatory way, mostly by Croats and Serbs

Chapter 3: A Short Historical background

Bosnia and Herzegovina in its present form, a country with a special ethnic structure, populated by three main nationalities, is the product of its medieval statehood and the periods of Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and Yugoslav rule. Each of these periods changed some features of the country and contributed new layers to the identities of its people.⁵² Being a natural bridge between east and the west, on a highway, so to speak, for many historical movements of armies and ideas, the geographical situation of Bosnia has heavily influenced the destiny of its people. Therefore it is important to look at the development of this country's history from medieval times until the present.

In order to provide a wider perspective and a contextual frame, I am going to give an overview of the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina in chronological order in this chapter. The main goal of such an outlining is not to delve too deeply into each historical period, but elaborate certain special events and processes which are relevant for this study's theme.

3.1 Medieval Bosnia (958–1463)

The history of Bosnia in this period is often confusing, so is the origin of the name "Bosnia" as well. There has been much speculation about this topic, and it has been differently perceived by different scholars. A historical document, written in 958 by the Byzantine emperor Constantin Porphyrogenitus, is the first document to make a reference to Bosnia. He referred to it as the "territory of Bosona" which was a territory subject to the prince of Serbia. This has been used by some Serbian scholars to prove that Bosnia was originally Serbian land. On the other hand, this territory was most likely under the prince of Croatia from the end of the ninth to the middle of the tenth century, so several Croatian scholars have likewise concluded that Bosnia must originally have been a Croatian area. However, the claims of both parties are anachronistic, lacking an understanding of how different the medieval political system was from today's. According to their logic one could fairly argue that both Serbia and Croatia were Greek lands, since they both were "in submission to the Greek Byzantine emperor", according to Porphyrogenitus.⁵³

Through this period of history three powerful rulers stand out. The first was Ban Kulin who ruled from 1180 to 1204, the second Ban Stephen Kotromanich who ruled from 1322-53, the

⁵² Attila Hoare (2007:33)

⁵³ Ibid., pp.33-35

third King Stephen Tvrtko who ruled from 1353-91. Under Ban Kotromanic, Bosnia expanded to include what is today's Herzegovina. During the second half of Tvrtko's reign Bosnia became the most powerful state within the western Balkans after expanding further to the south and acquiring a large area of the Dalmatian coast as well. Those were the high points of medieval Bosnian independence and power, but in between the reigns of these three rulers, Bosnia was at different times divided, either officially or de facto, as a result of the frequent contests for power between the local noble families.⁵⁴ According to the Bosnian Serb historian Vladimir Corovic, in Attila Hoare:

“King Tvrtko, already in the fourteenth century, provided the first example of the most just solution for the whole of our national future: Bosnia would fulfil its true historic mission, to become a political link between the Serbs and the Croats, as it is geographically, encompassing both in its state.”⁵⁵

Being separated from its neighbours and existing at periods as an independent country, also gave rise to a specifically Bosnian variety of script during the Middle Ages. It was known as “Bosancica” and it differed from Cyrillic.⁵⁶ Another important phenomenon is the Bosnian Church, which was based on an existing Catholic monastic system in the country and was related to local Bosnian Catholic traditions. The Bosnian Church differed in its practice and organization from both the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. Therefore it was labelled as heretical by both the Papacy and the Serbian Orthodox Church.⁵⁷

3.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina under Ottoman Era (1463–1878)

The Turkish army conquered the kingdom of Bosnia summer of 1463. This marked a new era in the country's history and introduced drastic changes in the political and cultural life.

However it allowed for the preservation of Bosnia's identity by incorporating it as an integral province of the Ottoman Empire with its historical name and territorial integrity. This was a unique case among subjugated states in the Balkans. The Ottomans introduced a number of central changes in the territory's socio-political administration, including a new landholding system, a reorganization of administrative units, and a complex system of social differentiation by class and religious affiliation.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Malcolm (1996:13)

⁵⁵ Attila Hoare (2007:37)

⁵⁶ Malcolm (1996:26)

⁵⁷ Attila Hoare (2007:42)

⁵⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina

The four centuries of Ottoman rule also had a huge impact on Bosnia's population structure, which changed many times because of the empire's conquests, frequent wars and migrations. A native Slavic-speaking Muslim community emerged and eventually became the largest ethno-religious group. This happened mainly as a result of a gradually rising number of conversions to Islam. The Bosnian Christian communities also experienced major changes, as their institutions were relegated to an inferior position. However, both Christian communities were partly protected by official imperial decrees, and the Orthodox community in Bosnia, even spread to new areas in this period, and went on to experience relative prosperity until the nineteenth century.⁵⁹

Even though Bosnia was ruled by Muslims, one could not call it an Islamic state. State policy was not to convert people to Islam, but rather to keep the country under control and extract from it money, manpower and the feudal incomes, in order to secure the needs of the Empire. The Christian religions were still allowed to function, albeit under different restrictions. They were also allowed to apply their own religious laws to their people, in their own courts, but only in civil matters.⁶⁰

Bosnia was relieved of the pressures of being a frontier province as the Ottomans expanded into Central Europe. After this, Bosnia experienced a prolonged period of general welfare and prosperity. However, in the late seventeenth century the Empire began to contract following military misfortunes. After the Great Turkish War with the treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, Bosnia became the Empire's westernmost province once again. The following hundred years were marked by many revolts within Bosnia, and further military failures. Later agrarian unrest led to the Herzegovinian rebellion, a widespread peasant uprising in 1875. This conflict spread quite fast and came to involve both several Balkan states and Great Powers. The Ottomans were eventually compelled to leave the administration to Austria-Hungary through the treaty of Berlin in 1878.⁶¹

3.2.1 The Islamization of Bosnia and Herzegovina

In the early medieval period, the population of Bosnia was slavified in linguistic terms. In the later medieval period, other various migrants also entered Bosnia, including a number of

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Malcolm (2007:49)

⁶¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina

people from the city-state of Dubrovnik. These were attracted by the commercial and mining activities. Some also came from other foreign coastal cities of the Adriatic, including Venice. In this way, Bosnians already represented a considerable ethnic mix by the Middle Age, which later on underwent some great changes.⁶²

The Islamization of a large part of the population under the Ottomans even today remains the most characteristic and distinctive feature of modern Bosnian history. During the 400-year period under Ottoman rule, members of all three Christian religious communities, i.e. the Bosnian Church, Catholic Church and Orthodox Church, converted to Islam. This was encouraged by different socio-economic and legal privileges enjoyed only by Muslims. All three Bosnian Christian Churches had weak structures, which helped the process of Islamization. However, religious conversions between the three main religions went not only in one direction i.e. conversions to Islam, but also from Catholicism to Orthodoxy. This dated back even before the eighteenth century because Catholicism was discriminated by Ottomans since it was the religion of their Austrian enemy, while the Orthodox Church were favoured because the Ottomans could manipulate it through the Patriarch in Constantinople. But in the early nineteenth century Ottoman policy began to favour the Catholics over the Orthodox, because of the influence of rebellions in Serbia. With this historical fact in mind, one can conclude that division between contemporary Muslims, Serbs and Croats into nations derives more from differences of religion rather than from differences of blood.⁶³

Bosnia and Herzegovina was a special region within the Ottoman Empire where the present Bosnian language was one of the official languages, while its citizens embraced Turkish customs and lifestyle. There were few foreigners ruling but mostly Bosniaks themselves, which made Bosnia special and privileged compared to other regions of the Ottoman Empire.⁶⁴

Although people belonged to different religions and interact with each other in limited ways, they had the same traditions. According to Malcom;

Some of the folk-religion practices mentioned in early sources have had a long history in both the Christian and the Islamic traditions...Many of the festivals' and holy days were celebrated

⁶² Attila Hoare (2007:41)

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 42-43

⁶⁴ Mønnesland (1999:120)

by both religions: these included Jurjevo (St George's Day), and Ilinden (St Elias's Day), which was known to the Muslims as Alidjun.⁶⁵

The Ottomans divided the populations based on religion rather than ethnicity. This approach, also called the "Millet system," allowed for the different religious groups to be organized into separate, self-governing communities. Moreover, one's religious affiliation decided one's legal standing within the empire. In this way the religio-political system of communal division laid the groundwork for more familiar expressions of nationalism in subsequent centuries. And as we will see later, the non-Muslim population will take the lead in this regard. Islamization affected the social, economic and political organization of society. It also remains the most distinctive and important feature of modern Bosnian history. Bosnian Muslims' connection to Ottoman structure pushed Christians to social, political and moral opposition. This is why many connected themselves with national-liberation movements in the 19th century becoming Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats.⁶⁶

3.3 The Origins of the Bosnian Muslim Nation

The emergence of a Muslim nationality had its roots prior to the 1820s, in the autonomy of the Bosnian region, and the military and urban elites in Ottoman Bosnia. The Muslim experience under Ottoman rule was different from the Christian, both in the cities and in the countryside. Ottoman rule produced the Muslim elite in the cities. These elites were special because it specifically had a Bosnian world-view. However it was only a small proportion of the medieval Bosnian nobility who was chosen to be a part of the Ottoman elite.⁶⁷

The character of the Bosnian Muslim elite went hand in hand with the origin and development of an Ottoman urban civilization in Bosnia. Islamization affected the towns most intensively, consequently Bosnian Muslim national identity was from its conception urban in orientation. The identities of the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian Croats were not affected in the same way and their national identity was rural in its orientation.⁶⁸

In its beginning, the national identity of Bosnian Muslims was influenced entirely by the consequences of the Vienna War, that ended in 1699 with Habsburg victory over the Ottomans which in turn left Bosnia as the Empire's most north-westerly frontier province

⁶⁵ Malcolm (1996:58)

⁶⁶ Mønnesland (1999:123)

⁶⁷ Attila Hoare, (2007:45)

⁶⁸ Ibid.

facing Christian Europe. The Muslims` position as a military autonomous frontier people who were continuously threatened by the Christian powers, would mould their future identity. The Bosnian Muslims identified with the Ottoman state and did not yet define themselves in opposition to it. However, the existence of a Bosnian administration and army manned mostly by Bosnian Muslims proved to be the incubator of the Bosnian Muslims national identity.⁶⁹

The Ottomans made an attempt to introduce reforms in the beginning of the 19th century but the Bosnian aristocracy, which was more conservative than the Ottoman leadership in Istanbul itself, worked against this. The Bosnian upper class felt that their privileges were threatened by centralization measures taken in Istanbul, consequently these were met with strong resistance. The situation became unstable because there was a Muslim upper class, which constituted only about 1/3 of the population while the majority was Christian. Orthodox Christians in Bosnia felt strong kinship towards their neighbours, the Serbs and Montenegrins, but their national consciousness was still weakly developed at this time. The Serbian state`s appetite for expansion to the west grew stronger from 1840s and onwards, as they wanted access to the sea and parts of Herzegovina. On the other hand, Bosnian Croats had contact with the Croatian national movement, and Franciscans contributed in development of national consciousness among Croats in Bosnia, as we will see later in this study.⁷⁰

The Bosnian Muslims` administrative and military autonomy became limited under the Ottoman rule in the eighteenth century. Their position as a frontier people threatened by the Christian powers, and the privileges enjoyed by different social layers among them, proved as we mentioned before, to be the incubator of their national identity.⁷¹

3.4 The Origins of the Bosnian Serb Nation

A people known as Serbs were a part of the Bosnian ethnic mix from the seventh century, but the original Bosnian Serbs did not give rise to a modern nationality, they assimilated instead with their neighbours. It was rather the Orthodox religion that shaped the basis for the modern Bosnian Serb nationality, and not their primordial ethnicity. There is no doubt that the

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 46-48

⁷⁰ Mønnesland, (1999:123)

⁷¹ Attila Hoare, (2007:48)

Bosnian Serbs of today have among their ancestors the original seventh-century Bosnian Slavs, but still their national identity was wholly a product of the Ottoman centuries.⁷²

Part of the Orthodox population of Bosnia arrived in the country after the fall of the medieval Bosnian state, for this reason, and maybe more importantly, through their links to the Orthodox Church, they share the folk mythology and songs of the Orthodox people of Serbia. As the Orthodox population grew so did the Orthodox Church, and its structure spread throughout Bosnia. The Orthodox Church was the institution that created the basis of a Serb national identity among the Bosnian Orthodox population. Under the Ottomans, the Bosnian Orthodox community enjoyed a certain level of autonomy together with a memory of the Serbian medieval state. Those were the twin foundations of Bosnian Serb nationhood. However the transformation of the Bosnian Orthodox into a self-conscious nation was a phenomenon of the nineteenth-century. A “national awakening” was shaped by the characteristic dichotomy between the conditions facing the Bosnian Serb urban population and those of the Bosnian Serb peasantry. It was the Bosnian Serb urban elite that acted to impart a “national” identity, as opposed to the Bosnian Serb peasantry who’s identity was purely religious and had only local basis. But in the end, what determined the character of the emerged national identity, were the social conditions and concerns of the peasantry and their relationship to their Muslim landlords.⁷³

Social interaction between individuals of all faiths in the towns did not mean that the sense of religious or national identity was weaker there, but it was balanced by an additional, shared sense of urban belonging. Since the Bosnian Serb urban elite were living in Bosnia for centuries, as distinct from Serbia, it gave them a consciousness and patriotic identification with their Bosnian homeland which in some way was quite similar to that of the Muslims. The Serb elite enjoyed close links with their Muslim counterpart. They were also involved in tax farming, which meant they were involved in the exploitation of the Christian peasantry. In this way, the Bosnian Serb urban elite stood between the Muslim elite and the Orthodox peasantry.⁷⁴

⁷² Ibid., p. 51

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 51-52

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 53

Early Bosnian Serb nationalists tended to support a national identity that was Bosnian in character. This identity was inclusive towards the Muslim elite, not anti-Islamic, and reflecting the Bosnian and urban background they shared with both the Bosnian Muslims and the Catholics. However the later Bosnian Serb national movement did not succeed to maintain its warm view of the Muslim elite, and consequently failed to inculcate a Serb identity among the Muslim elite. This was in large part due to the influence of the Bosnian Serb peasantry. In the process of instilling or “awaking” a sense of Serb nationality among the Bosnian Orthodox peasantry, the Serb nationalists slowly but surely moved it in a direction hostile to the Muslim elite because the Bosnian Serb peasantry’s identity was inseparably bound to its legally subordinate position vis-à-vis the Muslim landed elite.⁷⁵

In the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian periods, the Bosnian Serbs’ national consciousness focused on the legal and fiscal oppression of the Muslim landlords and Ottoman tax collectors. They also focused on the defence of the autonomous rights of the Orthodox Church as a religious community. In this context, Bosnian rural society was based on religious semi-exclusiveness and not on uniting different faiths to form homogeneous multi-faith communities.⁷⁶

Both the Orthodox and the Muslims enjoyed autonomy under the Ottomans. However, the autonomy of each became the basis for a separate and religiously defined nationhood, each in conflict with the other. This was a division that the urban-based Bosnian Serb national movement was unable to overcome.⁷⁷

3.5 The Origins of the Bosnian Croat Nation

The Bosnian Croats shared the Catholic faith of the pre-Ottoman rulers of Bosnia, unlike the Serbs and Muslims, and therefore recollected a trace of this heritage in their folk memory, just as Serbs had a folk memory of the medieval Serbian Empire. During the Ottoman period Bosnian Catholics continued to function within a Bosnian framework, but the modern Bosnian Croat nationality originally owes its existence to the Franciscan friars, who had been present in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1291 and who kept the Catholic tradition in Bosnia during the centuries of Ottoman rule. A cultural continuity between Bosnia before and after

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 53-55

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 55-56

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 56

the Ottoman conquest was represented by the Franciscan monasteries who were the only institution representing such a continuity. They preserved the memory of the medieval Bosnian kingdom, just as Serb Orthodox priests preserved the memory of the medieval Serbian kingdom. The organization of the Franciscans was Bosnian in character since they used the tradition of this kingdom to support the legitimacy and integrity of Bosna Srebrna ("Silver Bosnia"), which was the Bosnian Franciscan province under the Ottoman rule. Owing to Franciscans, the community that would become the Bosnian Croats survived.⁷⁸

During the last century of Ottoman rule the Franciscans formed a vibrant and dynamic community, with new churches and schools being build and new monasteries founded. They were active within a Catholic community whose members to the great extent referred to their language as "Bosniak". They were the carriers of the idea of a "Bosniak" nationality. The Bosnian Franciscan Ivan Franjo Jukic published his *Geography and Short History of Bosnia* in 1851, where he described Bosnian's inhabitants, regardless of their religion, as "Bosniaks", and their language as "Bosnian". Jukic asserted that Bosnia was the only Turkish state that has remained wholly clear of the Turkish language both in towns and in the villages. He further claimed that no language other than Bosnian was spoken and wrote of the "Croat and Bosniak brothers" as two closely related Slavic People even though they were of distinct branches.⁷⁹

Franciscan Antun Knezevic, Jukic's disciple, further elaborated the Bosniak idea in the 1860s. His idea was a counter to the Serb and Croat national ideologies. He developed the idea of an autonomous Bosnia with state rights based on historical tradition as well as on tolerance and equality in questions of religion and nationality. In his view, Bosnian Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics were actually all Bosniaks by nationality. He also supported the Austro-Hungarian invasion of 1878. He considered that it would bring liberation from the Ottomans and in that way Bosnia and Herzegovina would be able to achieve complete independence.⁸⁰

The Bosnian Croats were economically weaker and they were also fewer than the other two Bosnian nationalities during the 19th century. Serb-Muslim relations continued to dominate the Bosnian Question right up to the Yugoslav period. Bosnian Croats played a secondary

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 57-58

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 59

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 60

role, as opposed to the Austro-Hungarian Catholic administration and its collaborators. Up until 1918 they were the most politically moderate of Croats. This was mainly because of the special Bosnian framework within which their Croat identity developed. The Catholic Church in Bosnia had no particular relationship neither to the Kingdom of Croatia nor to the medieval Croatian state, unlike the Serb Orthodox Church which had relations to Serbia. That is why the transition of the Bosnian Catholics into a Bosnian Croat nationality took much longer and was a less immediate process than the transformation of the Bosnian Orthodox into a Bosnian Serb nationality. The transformation of the Bosniak consciousness among the Franciscans into a Croat consciousness, and the Croatisation of the Bosnian Catholics in general, came with the activities of the Croats from neighbouring Croatia and Dalmatia. The Bosnian Croat national movement dates to the 1860s. It appears to have been started by a non-Bosnian, just like its Bosnian Serb counterpart. The first attempt to inculcate Croat consciousness among the Bosnian Catholics gave very small results. The idea of having Croatian nationhood took root among the Bosnian Catholics first with the arrival of Austro-Hungarian rule.⁸¹

3.6 Bosnia under Austro-Hungarian Rule (1878–1918)

When Bosnia was annexed into the Austro-Hungarian empire, the Ottoman administrative structure was largely kept in place where it was considered workable. It was taken over by Austro-Hungarian personnel and Austro-Hungarianized in name. The authorities invested in a number of social and administrative reforms, which intended to make Bosnia-Herzegovina an exemplary colony. The aim was to establish the province as a model of political stability, which would help to neutralize the rising South Slav nationalistic sentiment. Habsburg rule concentrated on codifying laws. They introduced new political practices and generally provided for modernization. Each community continued to have its own schools, only now they were subsidized by the state. In this new system, which was set up by the administration, members of each religious community were instructed separately by their own clergy.⁸²

Austro-Hungary focused on advocating the ideal of a pluralist and multi-confessional Bosnian nation through an effort spearheaded by its administrator, Benjamin von Kallay. His intention was to develop the idea of Bosnian nationhood as a separate and unifying factor. His purpose was also to insulate the country from nationalist political movements in Serbia and Croatia. Von Kallay hoped that the term “Bosnian” would refer to people of all religious communities.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp.60-61

⁸² Malcolm, (1996:138-44)

It was of big importance for his purposes that the idea of Bosnian nationhood should be taken up first by Muslims, since unlike the Catholics and the Orthodox they had no sponsor-nation to lean on outside Bosnia's borders. Von Kallay was afraid that if the Muslims were to develop a separate identity of their own, his whole project would fall through. However, the concept of Croat and Serb nationhood had already spread to Catholic and Orthodox communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina from neighbouring Croatia and Serbia through the very networks of priests, schoolteachers and educated newspaper readers which Austro-Hungarian policy had helped to bring into being. In this way, the Croat and the Serb nationalism were too well established to allow for the widespread acceptance of a parallel idea of Bosnian nationhood, which in turn led to the failure of the "Bosnian" project.⁸³

It was in fact during this period that the "battle" for the Muslims started. Since they were without a clear national identity, both Serbs and Croats tried to portray them as real Serbs or real Croats. Muslim Slavs were identified with Turks, since religion was identified with nation under the Turkish millet system. However, the Muslims began to feel that they were losing their identity in the battle between Serbs and Croats. As a result, a Muslim national feeling began to grow.⁸⁴

By the latter half of the 1910s, nationalism was an essential factor of Bosnian politics, with national political parties corresponding to the three groups dominating elections. Each movement demanded Bosnian autonomy, not from the principle that Bosnia and Herzegovina was a sovereign body whose people had the right to decide over their own future, but from the principle that a religious community had the right to steer its own religious and cultural affairs free from outside interference. Each sought autonomy, not *for* the state, but *from* the state.⁸⁵ The Austro-Hungarian period was of great importance because it helped the Bosnian Muslims to come into the European economic and political system with special emphasis on adapting to the new conditions. The most decisive factor became the creation of a Muslim identity. This idea was followed by the Bosnian Muslims ever since.

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 147-49

⁸⁴ Mønnesland, (1999:127)

⁸⁵ Attila Hoare, (2007:80-86)

3.7 Yugoslav Experience

The history of Yugoslavia is not a simple one. The two dominant ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia were the Serbs, who were about 10 million, and the Croats, who were around 6 million.

However, constant friction between the groups followed, based on religious differences, political rivalries and different cultural influences. All this hindered Yugoslavia from becoming a stable and lasting union. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there were three ethnic groups based on religious differences, and this further exacerbated the prevalent disunity in spite of the common language. Both Croats and Serbs fought for possession of Bosnia by turns for centuries and in a shifting variable of alliances.

The common language of these groups was not enough to create a sense of solidarity and unity. Such a task was not an easy one for groups that had different histories, past hatreds directed towards each other, different cultural and political orientations, and last but not least: hostile religions and traditions. In the end, it became clear that Yugoslavia could not become a united country like for instance Italy, which overcame much larger linguistic variations than Yugoslavia, neither, as we shall see, did it manage to develop some kind of federal system of autonomous cantons like in Switzerland. It is important to note that later tensions over language were only a result, and not a cause, of disunity.⁸⁶

3.7.1 The First Yugoslavia, 1918-1941

After the First World War, Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the South Slav kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which was soon renamed “Yugoslavia”. In this First Yugoslavia, Serbs were the dominant nation and they traditionally considered Muslims as their enemies. Islam as a religion was discriminated. Muslims were not yet officially recognized as a nation and were generally considered either Croats or Serbs.⁸⁷ Croatian regionalism and Serbian centralization were the two dominant conflicting ideologies in the first Yugoslav state.

Bosnia’s major ethnic groups approached this in different ways and they were quite dependent on the whole political ambience. Serbs were highly dominant in governance and military. A

⁸⁶ Berdichevsky, (2004:165-66)

⁸⁷ Mønnesland, (1999:184)

majority also considered that Serbs were favoured in respect to other nations. This gave the Serbs the role of “big brother” and this role of leading the nation was resented. Even though there were over three million Bosnians in Yugoslavia, who were outnumbering Slovenes and Montenegrins taken together, Bosnian nationhood was denied by the new Kingdom. When the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was established in 1929, administrative regions were redrawn into four *banats*⁸⁸ where Serbs were generally the most numerous population. In this way every trace of the Bosnian entity was removed because ethnic lines together with historical lines were avoided on purpose. Conflict between Croats and Serbs about the nature of the state was solved by a compromise in 1939, where the Croatian *banat* was created. This meant that fragments of Bosnia and Herzegovina came under control of Croats.⁸⁹ This was in reality a partition of Bosnia between her neighbour countries. This however did not last very long because the politicians of Yugoslavia were interrupted by Nazi Germany and had to change attention towards the upcoming World War II.

3.7.2 Communist Period and Religion

The end of Second World War represented a break with the pre-war Yugoslavia and the Communist Party emerged in the dominant role. Bosnia and Herzegovina was set up as an equal republic in the post-war Yugoslavia, with borders to a very high degree following the borders from the Austro-Hungarian period. Other republics had one recognized predominant nation while Bosnia stayed multinational in character.⁹⁰

As to religion, the communists restricted religious activity under the pretext of dividing the church from the state. Of all religious communities in Yugoslavia, the Catholic Church was most feared among communists, since it was international and had its spiritual leader in Italy. Italy was the country which represented the biggest threat toward Yugoslav borders, and besides was much more anti-communist than the Orthodox Church. A whole string of measures were immediately introduced to restrict the power of the church. All religious instruction became forbidden in schools, religious press was stopped, all property of the church was confiscated and religious organizations were dissolved. Many Catholic vicars were sentenced in provisional lawsuits. The purpose was to discredit the Catholic Church and

⁸⁸ Banat, ethnically mixed historic region of eastern Europe - <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/51329/Banat>

⁸⁹ Malcolm, (1996:160-69)

⁹⁰ Bieber, (2008:19-20)

make Catholics oppose it, but the result was the exact opposite; for the first time the church became a unifying national symbol for all Croats.⁹¹

In the case of the Orthodox Church, it already marked itself before the war as anti-German. During the war, many orthodox priests were imprisoned while some joined the partisans. In Croatia and Bosnia hundreds of orthodox priests were killed, and hundreds of churches and monasteries were destroyed. Many massacres on the orthodox population by *ustashas*⁹² had a very traumatic impact on the Orthodox Church, which consequently regarded its self as a martyr church. Already in March 1945, before the world war was over, an official delegation from the Serbian Church was invited by the Russian Patriarch to travel to Moscow. This was supported by the authorities. Nevertheless, the Serb-Orthodox Church never got the privileged status some other Orthodox Churches in Eastern Europe enjoyed, for instance in Bulgaria. It was not expedient for the Yugoslav regime to stimulate Serbian nationalism in the same way, which made Serbian-Orthodox Church have far less influence, and for which reason it felt suppressed. That said, there were also examples where orthodox priests were persecuted by the regime.

In the 1960s, the authorities became more liberal towards religion, which lead to a rise in religious activity among Catholics. This however didn't have the same effect among the Orthodox, because the Orthodox Church had not been suppressed as much as the Catholic Church, and it just was not as attractive for young people, and did not have the same appeal to intellectuals as the Catholic Church.⁹³

On the other side, Muslims had a whole different issue to deal with. Like I mentioned before, Serbs had a derogatory name for Muslims, namely "Turks". In addition, Serbian *četniks*⁹⁴ performed many massacres against Muslims during World War II. Croatian *ustashas* tried to win the Muslims, without any luck, so many joined the partisans because of the promise of autonomy for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The question of national identity was not yet clarified in the case of Muslims. Officially there did not exist any separate Muslim nation after 1945.

⁹¹ Mønnesland, (1999:209)

⁹² Croatian fascist movement that nominally ruled the Independent State of Croatia during World War II. To make their state more purely Croatian, the *ustaše* set about exterminating its Serb, Jewish, and Gypsy inhabitants with a brutality that shocked even the Germans. - <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/620426/Ustasa>

⁹³ Mønnesland, (1999:212-13)

⁹⁴ Traditional Serbian term for an irregular fighter, applied to forces under Draza Mihailovic in the second world war. Also commonly used to refer to all Serb irregulars fighting in Croatia and Bosnia in the early 1990s. Malcolm, (1996:318)

Muslims had to declare their nationality as “not declared” in the first census. Within the communist party there were discussions in progress concerning the national status of Muslims, whether they should count as Serbs or Croats, or as “Yugoslavs”, but the party did not have any clear stand on that for a long period of time. The Muslim renaissance first began in the sixties. In the census of 1953 Muslims were registered as “Yugoslavs”. In 1961 the term “ethnic Muslims” was introduced, but first in 1968 they were recognized as a nation. In the census of 1971, they could for the first time state their nationality as “Muslims”.⁹⁵

In the post-war period, the Muslims organized themselves as a characteristic national culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many new mosques were built, in part with resources from the Islamic countries. The Islamic faculty was also established in Sarajevo during this period. The special reason why the general treatment of Islam improved in the sixties was that the Muslim community was now being used as a foreign policy tool by the regime. Tito was one of the founders of the non-aligned movement, in which many Muslim countries played an important role. Tito realized that Yugoslavia could gain some advantages by being the only European country, beside Albania, which had a large Muslim population. Tito gave the Muslims free reins, they were allowed to educate their clergy at the Alexandria academy, as well as to maintain contacts with the Arab countries. This was however something that could cut both ways, since the extensive contacts with the Arab world could influence the Muslims more than Tito and the communist system would appreciate. Bosnian Muslim circles were at times accused of “Islamic fundamentalism⁹⁶” by the regime and the party. During communism, “fundamentalism” was political term of abuse. Although without any real content, it was used mainly to label people. However, Yugoslav Muslims mainly represented a modern, European form of Islam, where the national idea was built on a secular and cultural identity that was “bosnianism”. This national identity, with its roots in the oriental culture became constantly stronger.⁹⁷

3.8 Bosnia and Herzegovina after Tito

After 35 years of total domination of Yugoslav policy, Tito died in May 1980. His death proved to be a turning point for Yugoslavia, and so also for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The

⁹⁵ Mønnesland, (1999:213)

⁹⁶ Fundamentalism is strict adherence to specific theological doctrines. The term usually has a religious connotation indicating unwavering attachment to a set of irreducible beliefs. -

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamentalism>

⁹⁷ Mønnesland, (1999:213-14)

non-functional structure of the state and the disability to solve an economic crisis related to enormous foreign loans, led Yugoslavia to a crisis which became ever more severe during the eighties. The crisis was further exacerbated with the rise of nationalism among Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo. It seemed that this had only just a limited impact on Bosnia, but at the end of the eighties the nationalistic discourse nevertheless progressed in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well. While nationalistic discourse belonged earlier to the political margins, it now found itself in the centre. The loyalty towards national identity started to be larger than loyalty towards ideology within the Communist party, especially on the local level. It became clear that nationalistic mobilization in Serbia had stronger impact on nationalism in Bosnia and Herzegovina than presumed in the first place.⁹⁸

The downfall of the Communist regime led to different visions of the future for the country and gradually to the first multi-party elections in Yugoslav republics since the beginning of World War II. These elections were held in November and December of 1990 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At first, political parties on ethnic principals were forbidden by the Election law from 1990, but following a constitutional court ruling, this regulation was abolished and it became possible for national parties to be registered. There were five parties that dominated the political scene in Bosnia, three of them were playing the crucial role and were explicitly mono-ethnic according to their profile. The first was SDA⁹⁹ (Stranka demokratske akcije), which advocated a multi-ethnic Bosnia, but actually had the Muslim population as its main target group. The second was SDS¹⁰⁰ (Srpska demokratska stranka), which was Serbian party and then HDZ¹⁰¹ (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica), which was Croatian. These three parties could be considered as national movements rather than political parties that advocated particular policies. What is really interesting is that all three parties were only “democratic” in the title. Not typically hostile towards one another in the beginning, the parties were rather working together in assaulting multi-ethnic parties, while at the same time their primary political platforms were contrary to one another. SDS advocated a centralized Yugoslavia, HDZ promoted independence while SDA was somewhere in between. The three national parties won the parliamentary elections with 71% of the votes (SDA: 30, 4%, SDS: 25, 2%, HDZ: 15, 5%). When we compare those numbers with the census from 1991 (Muslims: 43,7%, Serbs: 31, 4%, Croats: 17, 3%), we can conclude that most of the population gave

⁹⁸ Bieber, (2008:27-28)

⁹⁹ Democratic Action Party

¹⁰⁰ Serbian Democratic Party

¹⁰¹ Croatian Democratic Community

their votes to national parties on each side. This new coalition was extremely unstable because of their different visions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and her place within Yugoslavia. Their fundamental disagreement concerned legal, political and economic reforms as well as the new constitution. This new coalition finally crumbled in November 1991, during one of the key debates about the future of Bosnia within Yugoslavia. While HDZ and SDA were insisting on independence, SDS was flamingly opposed to anything that could separate Bosnia from Serbia. The members of SDS left the meeting in protest while the others voted for a proposal to declare sovereignty for BiH, which was the next step to full independence.¹⁰²

Already in September 1991 SDS began to create so called “Serbian autonomous areas” in the parts of the country with larger concentrations of Serbian population. Two mono-ethnic regions arose in those areas under control of HDZ and SDS, which formed the core of the para-states during the war. Already in March 1992 Serbs formally proclaimed a “Serbian Republic” within Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁰³

A referendum on independence was examined during parliamentary debates in January 1992. SDS was insisting on dividing Bosnia and Herzegovina into separate states for Muslims, Serbs and Croats with considerable autonomy. SDA and a larger part of HDZ wanted to first hold a referendum, then afterwards to discuss what kind of structure Bosnia and Herzegovina should have. These disagreements were never resolved despite attempts to reach a compromise. The referendum on independence was held on 29th February and 1st March 1992. According to data from the Republican electoral committee 2.073.568 voters voted, 64.31 per cent of a total of 3.253.847 registered voters. From the entire number of valid votes, which counted 2.069.932 ballots, 99.44 % voted “for” and 6.037 i.e. 0, 29% voted “against” the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The polarization of the population along national lines was clearly reflected in the outcome of the referendum. Already next day, supporters of SDS set up the first barricades in Sarajevo. After Bosnia and Herzegovina was internationally recognized on the 6th of April 1992, the war in BiH began in its full breadth.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Bieber, (2008:28-35)

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 35-36

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.36

3.9 The War (1992-1995)

In this part I will try to shed light in particular on the major events during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina that are relevant for this study.

Serbia and Croatia were involved in a long process of nationalist rivalry from the late nineteenth century onwards. In this way the Orthodox and Catholic Bosnians should think of themselves as Serbs and Croats. This made Bosnia's internal politics much more complicated and messy.

It was natural that the Orthodox and Catholic communities in Bosnia would identify with ethnic fatherlands, Serbia and Croatia, since they lived in the same country with these for seventy-four years. However when Yugoslavia dissolved:

“...The very same fact which made the maintenance of peace difficult – its nationally mixed population – also made it imperative.”¹⁰⁵

Bosnian Muslims were very much intermixed with the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs but at the same time they had no other fatherland to look to. When Bosnia and Herzegovina was recognized as an independent state on the 6th of April 1992, it was the beginning of a separation that was frightful and unjustifiable.

The union of Muslims and Croats became gradually fragile because on one side there was SDA, which tried to preserve a centralised republic, while on the other side there was HDZ which supported the secession of the western parts of Herzegovina. This area was inhabited mostly with Croats, and HDZ had great support from the Croatian government in this task. Already in May 1992, Serbian and Croatian leaders had begun discussions about the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina between those two countries, in effect the creation of a Great Serbia and Great Croatia. In the beginning of 1993, a new armed conflict broke out, this time between Croatian and Muslim forces in Herzegovina, especially around Mostar, but also in the parts of Central Bosnia where Croats had enclaves. This conflict ended under great pressure from United States in the beginning of 1994, through the Washington agreement.

The war itself ended in 1995. This happened after the Croatian forces won back the majority of the territory in Croatia which had been held by the Serbs, and afterwards, together with the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina took back large areas of Bosnia that were held by the

¹⁰⁵ Malcolm, (1996:235)

Bosnian Serbs. At the same time, NATO was bombing the positions of the Bosnian Serb army, reacting to a massacre in Sarajevo and, as many think, reacting belatedly to the Srebrenica genocide where approximately eighth thousand Bosniak men and boys were massacred within a few days by Serbian forces. These events led up to a truce followed by peace negotiations.¹⁰⁶

3.9.1 Dayton Agreement

The Dayton Agreement, often described as "a terrible way to end a terrible war", is the peace agreement reached in the Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio in November 1995, and formally signed in Paris on December 14th, 1995. This put an end on to the three and a half year long war in Bosnia. The main participants from the region were Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic who represented the Bosnian Serbs interests due to the absence of Karadzic, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic.¹⁰⁷

The only positive thing with the Dayton Agreement was that it put an end to the war, it didn't permanently deal with any of the factors that had led to the war and caused such a catastrophic amount of damage to the country and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thanks to Dayton, Bosnia and Herzegovina is today a quite complicated state, to say the least. It consists of two main entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) consisting of 51% of the total state territory and Republika Srpska (RS), which consists of 49% of the state territory. The third area is Brcko, which was proclaimed a district after being a topic of dispute and international arbitration.

The two entities have their own constitutions, which have to be in accordance with the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Federation as an entity consists of ten cantons, which in administrative terms are further split into municipalities.

The Parliament of the Federation has legislative powers and is comprised of the House of Representatives and the House of Peoples. Executive powers are exercised by the President of the Federation, two Vice Presidents and the Government of the FBiH.

RS as an entity is administratively split into regions and these are further split into municipalities. The National Assembly of the RS and the Council of Peoples in the RS

¹⁰⁶ Bieber, (2008:37-8)

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.38

exercise legislative powers, while the executive powers are exercised by the President and two Vice Presidents of the RS, as well as by the Government of the RS.

The territory of Brcko as mentioned earlier is a separate area and is attached neither to the Federation nor to the RS. Brcko was put under administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a separate district in the end of 2000, by decision of the International Arbitration Commission. It has its own police forces, multi-ethnic government, jurisdiction, Executive Board and Assembly.¹⁰⁸

Bosnia and Herzegovina is home to three ethnic constituent peoples. While the term Bosnian refers to all the inhabitants of Bosnia, regardless of national and religious identity, "Bosniak" is the national name of the Bosnian Muslims. This distinguishes their national identity from the two other major national groups in the country, the Bosnian Serbs who are Orthodox Christian and the Bosnian Croats who are Roman Catholic. It should be noted that "Bosniak" has replaced "Muslim" as an ethnic term in part to avoid confusion with the religious term "Muslim", as denoting an adherent of Islam.

Many experts point to the entities as a key obstacle to the attempt of making the system of administration and government easier to manage. Avoiding the entities, however, seems to be impossible because these represent one of the primal elements of the post-war order in the country. Neither the constitution of BiH nor international organizations allow a new international agreement which would reconfigure the constitutional order in BiH, because every change in the system would require approval of all the three communities. That is why a radical change of the system in order to make it more functional is close to impossible. Because of this, the governing of Bosnia and Herzegovina will stay very complicated since ethnic affiliation is set out to dictate the political program in the whole country.

3.9.2 Situation today

According to the 1991 census, Bosnia and Herzegovina had 4.4 million inhabitants, of whom 43.7 per cent were Muslims, 31.3 per cent were Serbs, 17.3 per cent were Croats and 7.6 per cent were other nationalities.¹⁰⁹ In 2004 the population was estimated to be 3.8 million. Because of the displacement caused by military action and ethnic cleansing it is important to

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.bhmisijaun.org/about-bih.html>

¹⁰⁹ Mønnesland, (1999:379)

remember that all data dealing with population might contain considerable errors. According to UNDP Human Development Report from 2002, the division among the ethnic groups is: 48,3% Bosniaks, 34.0% Serbs, 15.4% Croats and 2.3% others. The population is similarly split along religious lines: Muslim (40%), Orthodox (31%) and Catholic (15%).¹¹⁰

The Research and Documentation Centre in Sarajevo has published the most extensive research on Bosnia and Herzegovina's war casualties titled: The Bosnian Book of the Dead, which is a database that lists 97,207 names citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who were killed or went missing during the war. Findings were evaluated by an international team of experts before they were released. More than 240,000 pieces of data have been collected, processed, checked, compared and evaluated. The result was the final number of over 97,000 victims' names, victims of all nationalities. The research has shown that the majority of the 97,207 documented casualties, counting both civilians and soldiers, were Bosniaks (66 per cent), then followed Serbs (25 per cent) and in the end Croats (8 per cent). Looking at only civilian casualties, Bosniaks accounted for a massive majority of these (83 per cent) compared to Serbs (10 per cent) and Croats (5 per cent). At least 30 per cent of the Bosniak civilian victims were women and children.¹¹¹

Sixteen years after the war ended, many would say that the roots of the conflict are still very much present, and that the situation today is at its worst since the war. The country is deeply divided both territorially, politically and socio-economically as national affiliation dominates in every aspect of people's lives. Since Bosnia and Herzegovina was a part of the Yugoslavian federation and doesn't have a modern history of independence prior to 1992, it is still closely bound to neighbouring Croatia and Serbia through history, politics and economy.

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http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/national/europethecis/bosniaherzegovina/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina_2002_en.pdf

¹¹¹ <http://thebosnianwarfactstimelinehistorygenocidecriminals.wordpress.com/2007/08/24/bosnian-war-casualties-death-toll-figures-research-documents/>

Chapter 4: Religious Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Education is all about expanding horizons and increasing knowledge. It helps an individual to achieve personal identity and self-identification, to be productive in society, culture and science, to achieve versatility so that it becomes less possible to manipulate with the person. Education has the task of strengthening an individual, providing a sort of immunization against indoctrination, manipulation and other forms for exploitation by others trying to achieve political, ideological or religious aims. Unfortunately there are lots of examples of misuse of education and knowledge, a phenomenon that doesn't help the process of democratizing society. Totalitarian regimes typically manipulate facts, truths and knowledge, and consciously steer individuals and groups to think and act in the way that suits that particular regime or system. Still, we can't talk about Bosnia and Herzegovina as a country of totalitarian regime. BiH is officially democratic country in the process of developing a parliamentary democracy.

Nevertheless there are many examples in both media and daily life, bearing the appearance of indoctrination, of creation of collective uncritical opinions, of propagating nationalistic viewpoints etc. In a society like Bosnia, education is a particularly sensitive and vulnerable system, which has been especially damaged, not only from physical destruction, but even more from ideological-political and nationalistic force and pressure. After the last war, many examples of manipulation of education in the name of ideological and national-political use have been registered. From countless examples it can be concluded that a totalitarian mind-set and indoctrination are still dominating the scene of Bosnia's education system.

In this chapter I am going to give a short overview of education in Bosnia through history, with emphasis on religious education. We are going to look closer at the system today and how religious teaching is involved in education.

4.1 Establishment of the first religious schools under Ottoman Rule

Prior to the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia, literacy was limited only to individuals who were linked to churches, monasteries and courts. However after the Ottomans arrived, the first schools in BiH began to open, but the respective religious communities were the bearers of all

forms of education system; convents and parish churches for Catholics, *vakufs*¹¹² for Muslims and monasteries and churches for the Orthodox. Those were the places where all educational activity was carried out.¹¹³

Islamic schools, called *mekteb*, were established immediately after the arrival of the Ottomans, and they presented the majority of school network at that time. *Mektebs* were situated alongside mosques. *Hodzas*¹¹⁴ were in charge of classes and they were teaching Arabic script and basic Islamic religious lessons. The first forms of secondary schools also appeared during the time of Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These schools were specifically for those who wanted to become teachers in the *medresas*¹¹⁵ and experts of *sharia*¹¹⁶ law.

Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina gained their early literacy through the convents. The earliest convent schools were mentioned already in 1655. There were convent schools in Kresevo, Fojnica, Modrica, Srebrenica, Tuzla and Visoko. Franciscans did a work of great merit when it comes to elementary schooling of Catholics. Franciscans were both teachers as well as writers of books for Catholic schools.

There doesn't exist reliable data about the beginning of education of Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but from the middle of 19th century we can follow the work of modern Orthodox schools. And from the second half of 19th century the Orthodox schools had established a teaching curriculum. Textbooks were first supplied from Vojvodina, but from 1867 onwards they were printed in the *Vilajetska* printing house. We know that at the end of that century, at the beginning of Austro-Hungarian rule, there already existed 56 Orthodox schools with over 3500 pupils. These schools were funded by the Church communities and were periodically helped with books and equipment from Serbia and Vojvodina.

At the end of Ottoman rule, in the second half of the 19th century, education started to expand, and it was in this period that the first forms of secular education appeared. In 1869 an

¹¹² Vakuf is an inalienable religious endowment in Islamic law, typically denoting a building or plot of land for Muslim religious or charitable purposes. The donated assets are held by a charitable trust. – (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waqf>)

¹¹³ Pavlovic, (2008:43)

¹¹⁴ Preacher of Islam

¹¹⁵ Type of religious educational institution

¹¹⁶ Religious law of Islam

educational law was made effective, the first of that kind in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to this law it was possible to establish confessional schools, but at the same time it was possible to establish secular schools as well.¹¹⁷

All in all, we can say that during the last centuries of Ottoman rule, educational policy was extremely poor and almost disastrous. This fact is supported by the data showing the literacy rate in BiH at that time. According to some data, after Austro-Hungarian Monarchy occupied BiH, only three per cent of the population were literate. However, we should not regard these figures as comprehensive, since there were three more languages in use during Ottoman rule. Those were: Turkish, Arabic and Persian. Turkish was the official language of administration and military. Arabic was the language of religion and education, while Persian was the language of literature and poetry.¹¹⁸

4.2 Religious Education during Austro-Hungarian rule (1878 – 1918)

During the Austro-Hungarian rule, public elementary schools were opened and were financed by the state for the first time in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The state regulated the educational program, and intervened to make sure education was in accordance with its cultural, economic and political aims. Books for public elementary schools were supplied from Croatia in the first period of Austro-Hungarian rule. Afterwards they were printed in Sarajevo. The school's programs were directed towards political and economic interests and needs.

In the beginning the Muslim and Orthodox population were sceptical of the opening of public schools, but with time the public school system prevailed. Beside the public ones, confessional schools were still present. The first normative acts adopted by the Austro-Hungarian educational administration were regulations for the organization of elementary schools in BiH, and in 1912, the law about compulsory registration of pupils into the public schools. Although both the administration and the law were trying to increase the registration of pupils into public schools, and in this way reduce the number of confessional schools and their influence, this goal was not accomplished. That same year there were 156 confessional and private schools in BiH. However, right before the First World War, Austro-Hungarian authorities abolished a significant number of confessional schools, but also some public ones. It is important to mention that a significant role in cultural and educational life was played by

¹¹⁷ Pavlovic, (2008:43-44)

¹¹⁸ Peco, (2008:82-83)

the national educational-cultural associations Gajret (Muslim), Napredak (Croatian) and Prosvjeta (Serbian). These associations with distinctively national characteristics were offering scholarships, helping especially children from the countryside.¹¹⁹

Moral and religious education was still very important, so it was incorporated into the educational plan and program of newly opened public schools, with two classes per week. However, moral and religious education was also conducted through all other subjects, especially through the readers, where pupils were taught about family life and the importance of preserving the sacred family connections.¹²⁰

4.3 Religious education between two World Wars

After the First World War, Bosnia and Herzegovina became a part of the new founded Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians. This new state consisted of areas that had very unequal and different cultural-educational levels. However, all schools had different programs with specific educational lessons. The primary task was to educate the young generations in the spirit of national political goals. The educational system, types of schools, teaching curriculum and books were valid for the whole new country. Particular attention during this period was given to religious teaching. It is important to note that children who did not belong to a religion recognized by law could not attend schools.¹²¹ Elementary education in BiH during this time is stagnating, illiteracy and backwardness is widespread, and participation by girls in the schools was low, barely 25 per cent. Of the private confessional schools only Catholic elementary schools and *Mektebs* continued with their work.¹²²

Since the state model was centralistic, education policy was also created in one place. That meant that the tasks and purpose of education fitted the interests of the state. The Vidovdan Constitution¹²³ from 1921 said following about education in section 16:

“Sciences and arts are free and enjoy the protection and support of the state. University education is free. The education is a state education. Teaching rests on one and the same

¹¹⁹ Pavlovic, (2008:45-47)

¹²⁰ Peco, (2008:118-119)

¹²¹ See adaption of Vidovdan-law on page 5

¹²² Pavlovic, (2008:49)

¹²³ The Vidovdan Constitution was the first constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. It was approved by the Constitutional Assembly on June 28, 1921. The Constitution is named after the feast of St. Vitus (*Vidovdan*), a Serbian holiday. The Constitution was in effect until King Alexander proclaimed his January 6th Dictatorship on that date in 1929. - http://sh.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vidovdanski_ustav

foundation in the whole country, but is adapted to the environment it is intended for. All schools must provide moral education and foster a sense of public responsibility in accordance with the spirit of national unity and religious tolerance. Primary schooling is provided by the state and is universal and compulsory. Religious education is given separately, in accordance with the wishes of the parents or guardians, according to their religious affiliation, and in accordance with their religious precepts. ... State education is given without registration fees, tuition fees or other fees. All educational institutions are under state supervision. The state shall help the effort of popular education and enlightenment. Minorities of other races and languages will receive primary schooling in their mother tongue in accordance with regulations to be established by law”¹²⁴

At first sight this definition of education seems almost perfect, but it soon becomes clear that the schools system was drafted to promote the regime's other political goals. As the Kingdom became more organized with time, determinants proclaiming democratic social relations began to fade away from the Constitution and laws. Just one year after adaption of Vidovdan Constitution, on 14.11.1922, the Ministry of Education informed:

“By decision of the Minister of Education S. N. Nr 6835 and by article 12 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes of 28th of June 1921, it has been decided that pupils who do not belong to the legally recognized religions can not be students in the schools of our kingdom.”¹²⁵

The Ministry of Education openly went further and appointed obligatory prayer for all pupils, regardless of religious affiliation. The cultural and religious identity and interests of the Muslims population in Bosnia were neglected in this period.¹²⁶

In August of 1926 an elementary school educational plan was adopted, and the year after an educational program was adopted too. From the school year 1927/28 the subject *Learning*

¹²⁴ ”Nauka i umjetnost slobodne su i uživaju zaštitu i potporu države. Univerzitetska nastava je slobodna. Nastava je državna. U cijeloj zemlji nastava počiva na jednoj istoj osnovi prilagođavajući se sredini kojoj je namenjena. Sve škole moraju davati moralno vaspitanje i razvijati državljansku svest u duhu narodnog jedinstva i verske trepeljivosti. Osnovna je nastava državna, opšta i obavezna. Verska nastava daje se po želji roditelja, odnosno staralaca podvojeno po veroispovestima a u saglasnosti sa njihovim verskim nacelima... Državna nastava se daje bez upisnine, skolarine i drugih taksa. Sve ustanove za obrazovanje pod državnim su nadzorom. Država će pomagati rad na narodnom prosvjecivanju. Manjinama druge rase i jezika daje se osnovna nastava na njihovom maternjem jeziku pod pogodbama koje će propisati zakon.” - Peco, (2008:149-150)

¹²⁵ ”Odlukom gospodina ministra prosvjete S. N. Br. 6835 a na osnovu člana 12 Ustava Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca od 28. juna 1921. godine riješeno je da učenici koji ne pripadaju zakonom usvojenim vjerama ne mogu biti djaci u školama nase Kraljevine.” – Ibid., p. 151

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp. 152-154

about religion and moral was taught in elementary schools two classes per week. It was compulsory and had a very important place in whole system of education.¹²⁷

Very often one could hear imams, especially in rural areas, warning the Muslim population to keep their children away from public schools because it would be "damaging" for them. In fact the Muslim population was exposed to clear political, economic and cultural pressures from both the Serbian and the Croatian side. Their priority was to create an awareness and gain acceptance for the idea that Bosnian Muslims were Serbs or Croats of the Islamic faith. This happened through the activity of cultural associations and through religious education and church activities.¹²⁸

4.4 Religious Education During the Period of Socialistic Rule

Most schools were destroyed or damaged after World War II so the priority was to build and repair schools facilities, and to include all children in the education, both those ready for school and who had missed years of education. The first school year began in June 1945 and lasted until October the same year. The elementary school network was growing rapidly. Whereas only 684 elementary schools with approximately 100.000 pupils and 1200 teachers worked in 1945, already in the school year of 1948/49 there were 1500 elementary schools with approximately 280.000 pupils and 3000 teachers. In 1947 the first seven-year elementary schools were established, and just two years after that a law was passed about compulsory eight-year elementary education. It is important to mention that also adults were included in elementary education after the war, where special sections were opened especially for them within elementary schools. A very significant difference in the new educational system was the banning of religion altogether, which meant that it did not existed as a school subject at all. During the period from end of World War II until the 1990s, elementary school development in BiH was massive, intensive and very dynamic.¹²⁹

According to Peco there were two important characteristics of the education system during this period in BiH. The first was the fact that education was part of the unity and brotherhood policy, which was created and dictated from outside the area and reality of BiH. The other characteristic was that the character of educational policy was a consequence of social

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 186

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 195

¹²⁹ Pavlovic, (2008:49-50)

change, since the ideological and political platform of the new social organization also represented the ideological basis of educational policy. Political principles of equal rights, brotherhood and unity and human rights were incorporated in all normative acts of the community. In the same way it was also incorporated into laws which regulated the area of education. These principles were defined both as social values and as society's goals.¹³⁰

Since educational policy during this period was built on Marxist-Leninist theory, the relation between schools and religion was also defined through this same theory. Active propaganda was used, with the goal to convince the masses, students and pupils about the non-existence of the God. In his booklet "*School and Religion*" Milos Jankovic, one of the most recognized theoreticians in the area of anti religious education, among other things says that one has to start with anti-religious education while children are small and not yet in school. One has to create a materialistic view of the world in children, and this has to be accomplished by explaining to them natural phenomena such as thunder, lightning, drought, hail etc. In the same booklet, it is also recommended that in history classes, pupils should be taught about religion as a means of spiritual oppression of the working classes. In literature pupils should be introduced to writings where church and religion are criticized, and so on. Also the parents received anti religious literature in parent - teacher meetings. Peco concludes that eliminating religious education from the educational programs has its political and cultural justification, but that banning of religious practice can only be interpreted as ideological pressure intended to create a single mentality, which is characteristic of totalitarian society.¹³¹

The first constitution of FNRJ¹³² from 1946, among other things, defined the question of freedom of religion. Section 25 of this constitution says:

"The citizens are guaranteed the freedom of conscience and the freedom of religion. The church is separated from the state. Religious communities whose teachings do not run counter to the Constitution can conduct their religious affairs freely and perform their rituals freely. Religious schools that educate clerics are independent, but are under the general supervision of the state. The misuse of the church and religion for political purposes is forbidden, as is the existence of political organizations based on religion."¹³³

¹³⁰ Peco, (2008:209-210)

¹³¹ Ibid., pp. 219-222

¹³² Federativna Narodna Republika Jugoslavija (Federativ National Republic of Yugoslavia)

¹³³ "Gradjanima je zajamcena sloboda savjesti i slobodna vjeroispovijest. Crkva je odvojena od drzave. Vjerske zajednice cije se ucenje ne protivi Ustavu slobodne su u svojim vjerskim poslovima i u vršenju vjerskih obreda. Vjerske skole za spremanje svećenika su slobodne a stoje pod opstim nadzorom drzave. Zabranjena je

We can notice that this section about religion is regulated in the same way as in democratic countries at that time. In reality, however, this question was treated quite differently.

Approximately ten years later, on the basis of constitutional law from 1953, a law about religions was passed, which regulated all questions related to the organization of church and church life. According to this law, religious education was completely expelled from schools, and from then on could only be organized in religious institutions. To attend religious classes both parents' permission was needed and also the agreement of the minor. The law left an opportunity for religious communities to organize religious schools, to independently make educational plans and programmes, and to independently appoint teachers. However the state performed surveillance of religious schools and their work.¹³⁴ Furthermore, section 5 of the same law forbids the organizing of religious meetings, religious ceremonies and religious education outside religious institutions.¹³⁵

Yugoslavia's constitution from 1963 treats religion the same way as the constitution from 1946 did. While in theory there was no considerable intervention of the state into the business of religious communities, something else happened in practice. It happened quite often that people who were religious were also punished by the regime. Seen within the framework of such a relationship between state and religion, we can conclude that state policy discriminated believers by punishing them, while atheists were rewarded.¹³⁶

During the 1980s, the intellectual elite in BiH created and defined a new social consciousness, which was quite skilfully incorporated into the nationalistic framework, but also into education and religion.¹³⁷

4.5 Religious Education During Aggression on BiH and Post Dayton Period

As mentioned above, the process of nationalism became more intense in BiH during the 1980s and achieved its climax only ten years later, i.e. in the 1990s. This of course was reflected in the educational system as whole, but especially in subjects like history, language and religious education.

zloupotreba crkve i vjere u politicke svrhe i postojanje politickih organizacija na vjerskoj osnovi.” – Peco, (2008:238)

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp. 238-239

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 239

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 274

After the first multiparty elections in November 1990, national activists began to create a new educational plan and program, to strengthen national identity, national literature and national history. Religion came back on the public scene over night.

During the war in BiH, three national educational policies were formed. The war finally caused the fundamental division of the educational system along ethno-political lines. Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats developed education in close cooperation with the equivalent sectors in neighbouring Serbia and Croatia. In the Federation, religious teaching was officially introduced to the schools as a subject for the first time in 1994, while this happened one year earlier in RS.

As a consequence of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the education system today suffers from lack of coordination, but also from too much decentralisation. RS and FBiH embraced different political systems and the same goes for education. On one side we have RS which functions as a strongly centralised republic. On the other side we have FBiH, which consists of ten highly autonomous cantons which again all have mandates to make decisions concerning education. Bosniak politicians are mostly in favour of the strengthening the common institutions because they want further integration of BiH. Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs representatives on the contrary in general argue for more autonomy both at the entity and lower levels.

In the FBiH religious teaching is optional-obligatory, meaning that parents have possibility to choose this school subject, but once it is chosen, it becomes obligatory. In RS, religious education is obligatory for all pupils during elementary school, and neither parents nor the children have a choice.¹³⁸ For instance, in Sarajevo Kanton (KS), during the school year of 2006/2007, 95,55 per cent of the pupils attended religious classes, compared with 89,29 per cent in 1998/1999.¹³⁹ This only shows that the response is increasing for every year, and that religious communities have established roots in society and became a quite important part of it.

¹³⁸

http://www.zapravicoobrazovanje.ba/Istrazivanja/8.%20FOD%20religija_i_skolovanje_preispitivanje_bh_modela.pdf - p.86

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.17

4.6 Culture of Religions

Since BiH is both a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, there were attempts to introduce a new school-subject "Culture of Religions". This school subject was envisioned for secondary education. Even though I am writing only about religious teaching in primary school, I will take this part into consideration because of the relevance for my study. Here we will see that the attempt to introduce this subject into schools was rejected by all religious leaders. This confirms my hypothesis that it is in the interest of all three religious leaders and religious communities to have religious teaching separately, because in this way children are separated from each other and, secondly, they learn just a minimum about each other's religions. In RS for instance, children do not learn anything about other religions through Orthodox religious education. This leads to further segregation and it creates fear of the unknown, i.e. each other.

Already in 2000 the OSCE¹⁴⁰ began the above-mentioned project in collaboration with the Goethe Institute¹⁴¹ in Sarajevo. They also involved ministries, religious communities, teachers and other experts from this domain. Absence of knowledge is one of the main reasons of mutual conflicts and misunderstandings. This is why OSCE wanted to introduce this school subject. The main idea was that "Culture of Religions" would help to avoid misunderstandings and possible future confrontations by being objective about other cultures and religions, their practice and traditions. It would strengthen confidence and teach children tolerance and understanding of the other, those different from them. It would also give pupils the opportunity to discover their own country from different points of views, and encourage critical thinking.

The aims of this subject are:

- Acquiring knowledge about the religions, especially the religions in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Understanding the significance of religion as an important factor in the shaping and development of different cultures and civilizations;
- Developing an awareness of the religious traditions, beliefs and practices, with an emphasis on that which is characteristic for Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Fostering tolerance and developing the intellectual capability to accept the universal religious values;

¹⁴⁰ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina)

¹⁴¹ Goethe-Institute provides information on the culture, language and other general aspects of Germany. - <http://www.goethe.de/ins/ba/sar/uun/bsindex.htm>

•Developing the capability for dialogue and for respecting people of other convictions.¹⁴²

This was however met with harsh criticism. It was the three religious communities in BiH that objected to the introduction of this subject, because it was seen as a replacement for religious teaching, even though it was emphasized that it would only be an alternative to religious teaching.¹⁴³

According to Claude Kieffer who managed this project, it was in particular the Catholic Church, which opposed to this school subject. It could be that the Catholic Church feared losing influence in the schools. The Orthodox Church has complete control of the school system in the quite homogeneous entity of RS, while the Islamic Community is strongly positioned in FBiH. In those areas where Catholics are dominant, the Catholic Church also has control. The problem here is that many inhabitants of these areas are moving to Croatia, since most Catholics have Croatian passports and consider themselves a minority in BiH.¹⁴⁴

It is quite interesting to notice that it was the Catholic Church that objected the most to the introduction of this new subject, since the first step towards a neutral model can be seen exactly in the Catholic religious classes. Besides being educated about their own religion, pupils are also being educated about other religions, and most importantly, in a relatively neutral light. Emphasis is on similarities shared by the different religions and on the necessity for tolerance, dialogue and love.

As opposed to the Islamic and Orthodox religious education, which aims to teach its own religion firmly, to instil acceptance of its value system and preserve its own traditions and culture.¹⁴⁵

The curriculum for "Culture of Religions" was completed in 2003, but this subject is not being taught in all schools in BiH. This is however not surprising at all if we remember that

¹⁴² "• Sticanje znanja o religijama, s naglaskom na religije u Bosni i Hercegovini;
• Razumijevanje značaja religije kao važnog faktora u oblikovanju i razvoju različitih kultura i civilizacija;
• Razvijanje svijesti o religijskim tradicijama, vjerovanjima i praksi, s naglaskom na ono što je karakteristično za BiH;
• Podsticanje tolerancije i razvijanje intelektualnih sposobnosti za prihvatanje univerzalnih religijskih vrijednosti;

• Razvijanje vještine dijaloga i poštivanja ljudi drugih ubjeđenja." - <http://kotor-network.info/research/joint/2005/BiH.htm#sec3>, p. 12

¹⁴³ <http://www.danas.org/articleprintview/1808272.html>

¹⁴⁴ <http://kotor-network.info/research/joint/2005/BiH.htm#sec3>

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

there are 13 Ministries of Education in BiH. It is, however, important to mention that this subject is taught in all cantons with a Bosniak majority, while it was only experimentally taught in 2008 in the secondary schools of RS.

The director of the Pedagogical Institute in RS, Mirko Banjac, says that the problem was with the textbook, which in his own words was disastrous, whereas the program for "Religion of Cultures" is good. There were also problems with lecturers who were mostly philosophy and history professors, and therefore not suitable according to Mirko Banjac.¹⁴⁶

Most of the pupils who had this subject, where the grade was not a part of their general grades, were positive about it and had the following things to say: "I think it is good that this subject was introduced, because we get to know about other people, their customs and habits," and "I think that Cultures of religion should have been introduced earlier because many wars were fought because of religions and beliefs". According to Minister Kasipovic, this way of thinking was also supported by an anonymous survey, which was done among pupils in secondary schools in RS. About 41,8 per cent of the students said that they would like to have that subject, about 33 per cent would not, while the rest did not give any answer. This however was not enough to make the Ministry of Education introduce this subject.¹⁴⁷

In 2006 the Commission of Foreign Ministries of the Council of Europe, where BiH is a member since 2002, recommended principles for approaching religion in public education in all 46 member states. This essentially called for all 46 countries to have a multi-faith state religious education in publicly founded schools. This was the first time of formal inter-governmental recognition, on this scale, of the role of religious education in creating understanding of a multi-cultural and multi-religious world. As we have already seen, the type of religious education offered today in BiH is mono-religious.¹⁴⁸ Religious education is enjoying a high rate of approval in the whole territory of today's BiH, and it fulfils the requirements of the religious communities. It is also mostly in harmony with national law and international obligations. The educational policy in the Federation is dictated by the cantons, while the program of religious education is created by the respective religious communities.

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.danas.org/articleprintview/1808272.html>

¹⁴⁷ Ibid

¹⁴⁸ O'Brien and Palmer (2007:50-51)

However, it is important to make clear that religious education is being communicated in a way that causes deep concern, because of its discrimination of minorities and negative influence on social cohesion.¹⁴⁹

4.7 Law on Freedom of Religion in BiH

In this part we will look closer at the Law on Freedom of Religion and how these agreements work in practice, and if they work at all.

All persons within the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms. One of these freedoms is the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, which is guaranteed by the law, by article II, paragraph 3 in the Enumeration of Rights of the Constitution.¹⁵⁰

Based on section IV 4. a) and relating to section II article 3. g) and article 5. a) of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Parliamentary assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina passed the Law on Freedom of Religion and Legal Position of Churches and Religious Communities in January 2004.¹⁵¹

In this law, section 4. article 1, it says:

(...) Everyone shall have the right to religious education, which shall be provided solely by persons appointed so to do by an official representative of his Church or religious community, whether in religious institutions or in public and private pre-school institutions, primary schools and higher education which shall be regulated according to the specific regulations.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ <http://kotor-network.info/research/joint/2005/BiH.htm#sec3>

¹⁵⁰ http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/bk00000_.html

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<http://www.ombudsmen.gov.ba/odjeli/Zakon%20o%20slobodi%20vjere%20i%20pravnom%20Opolozaju%20crkava%20i%20vjerskih%20zajednica%20u%20BiH%20-%20Sl.%20glasnik%20BiH%2005-04.pdf>, p.1, "Na osnovu clana IV 4. a) a u vezi sa clanom II tacka 3. g) i tacka 5. a) Ustava Bosne i Hercegovine, Parlamentarna skupstina Bosne i Hercegovine, na 28. sjednici Predstavnickog doma, odrzanoj 22.januara 2004. godine i na 17. sjednici Doma naroda, odrzanoj 28. januara 2004. godine, usvojila je Zakon o slobodi vjere i pravnom poloza ju crkava i vjerskih zajednica u Bosni i Hercegovini."

¹⁵² http://www.mrv.ba/images/stories/documents/Law_on_religion.pdf, p.2

As we can see, this law guarantees all pupils their right to religious teaching. It also stresses the responsibility and the right of religious communities to have religious education within the framework of the school curriculum.¹⁵³

The same law, section 4, article 2, states the following:

Churches and religious communities shall not, when teaching religion or in other actions, disseminate hatred and prejudices against any other Churches and religious communities or its members, or against the citizens of no religious affiliation, or prevent their freedom to manifest in public their religion or belief.¹⁵⁴

As we can see, this law forbids dissemination of hatred and prejudices against any other religious communities. However this is only on paper. Personally I have had several informal conversations with teachers on all three sides, who wanted to stay anonymous, and they confirmed that religious teaching classes are often the source of discrimination and segregation among young children. Firstly, schools that organize religious teaching for all students are a rarity, because most schools organize this subject only for the majority population. Unfortunately, the rest is simply left out, and for this reason, is being bothered and teased by the children of the majority. This is a violation of constitutional law, that everyone should enjoy freedom of personal religious commitment.

In the framework law on primary and secondary education in BiH, under general objectives of education, article 3. d) it says:

Developing awareness of commitment to the state of BiH, one's own cultural identity, language and tradition, in a way appropriate to the legacy of the civilization, learning about others and different by respecting the differences and cultivating mutual understanding and solidarity among all people, ethnic groups and communities in BiH and in the world.¹⁵⁵

Religious education today, as a schools subject, is often involved and complicit in breeding a special educational climate, centred around the fundamental idea of US and THEM. This contributes to the growth of intolerance, hatred and prejudice. This results in young Croats

¹⁵³ <http://kotor-network.info/research/joint/2005/BiH.htm#sec3>, p.2

¹⁵⁴ http://www.mrv.ba/images/stories/documents/Law_on_religion.pdf, p.2

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https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=gmail&attid=0.1&thid=12fc02e5bbe97a5f&mt=application/msword&url=https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui%3D2%26ik%3D6b72d59d8d%26view%3Datt%26th%3D12fc02e5bbe97a5f%26attid%3D0.1%26disp%3Dattd%26zw&sig=AHIEtbQZorzORstSM3AN0_9fDFGSH-dbew&pli=1, p.2

from Bosnia feeling more as Croats from Croatia. The same holds true for Bosnian Serbs who identify more with Serbs from Serbia, than as being Bosnian Serbs, while Bosniaks identify themselves with Muslims around the world, rather than with their nearest neighbours. It seems that all three nations lack the interest to develop a further identification with the other inhabitants of BiH.

One concrete example is the intimidation and harassment of Bosniak children by the police in the town of Stolac. The excuse the police used was an investigation about the removal of "illegally placed exclusivist religious symbols in Stolac Secondary School". This "investigation" included the illegal interrogation of children in their homes without a warrant or written approval, followed by verbal insults addressed to both children and their parents by the policemen. It is important to keep in mind that, on a daily basis, these returnee children entered school, a public institution of the state of BiH, under para-state symbols and Catholic religious symbols hanging above the entrance. Placing those symbols in such locations is not permitted in public institutions of the secular BiH, and is strictly forbidden by the laws and the Constitution of BiH. It is also in contradiction with the Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children from 2002, whose implementation is binding and supported by international conventions of the rights of the child. In the end it is important to mention two things. First, that local authorities imposed the use of the national curriculum of the Republic of Croatia for children of Croat ethnicity who attend the so-called Croat secondary school. Secondly, that Ivo Raguz, the school director is a war crime suspect and there is court documentation to confirm this in the form of recorded testimonials from the Hague Tribunal.¹⁵⁶

In the same law, under II Principles in Education, 3. Enhancing respect for human rights, Article 9. it says:

Schools shall promote and protect religious freedom, tolerance and dialogue in BiH.

Having in mind the diversity of beliefs within BiH, pupils shall attend religious education only if this matches the beliefs of their parents.

The School cannot undertake any measures or activities aimed at limiting the freedom of expressing religious beliefs, or acquiring familiarity with other and different beliefs.

¹⁵⁶ http://www.rtvmo.ba/index2.php?option=com_content&task=emailform&id=17656&itemid=2

Students who do not wish to attend religious education classes shall not in any way be disadvantaged compared to other students.¹⁵⁷

Article 10. of the same law under II Principles in Education, 3. Enhancing respect for human rights it says that:

During educational or other activities in school, no didactic or other material must be used or exposed that could reasonably be considered as offensive to the language, culture and religion of students that belong to any ethnic, national or religious group. Neither are teachers and other school personnel allowed to give any such statements¹⁵⁸

In the case of religion, constitutional law did not engage in questions about religion, or the relation between school and religious education. Because of this, every community solved this question in the way that fit them best. It was first in 2003 that the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH adopted the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in BiH, which is in force in both entities. In addition every canton passed their own laws on education.¹⁵⁹ All this could eventually lead to great differences between the parts of BiH, with some parts becoming less secular than the rest.

The year after, in 2004, the Parliamentary assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina also passed the Law on Freedom of Religion and Legal Position of Churches and Religions. However, also the Constitution of BiH, in article II, Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Paragraph 4, regulated the question of non-discrimination:

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms provided for in this Article or in the international agreements listed in Annex I to this Constitution shall be secured to all persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.¹⁶⁰

In places where there is a minimal amount of population diversity, children from the minority group feel dominated by the majority, and in some ways excluded. On the other hand in the places where there are sufficient minority students to make a request, the group can study their own national group of subjects separately from the majority children. However, returnee

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p.4

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ <http://kotor-network.info/research/joint/2005/BiH.htm#sec3>, p.2

¹⁶⁰ http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/bk00000_.html

numbers are never sufficient to allow for this to happen, outside certain key return areas. In cases like this, children have no choice but to learn according to the preference of the dominant group – studying their language, their textbooks and their curriculum without regard to their rights as citizens of the country.¹⁶¹

There are also examples of school names and other school symbols, which do not suit all children regarding their tradition, religion and culture. They can often be insulting as well. Cultural differences are neither treated as a value nor as resource, but rather as problem and as a subject of insult, segregation and ridicule.

4.8 Experience of Others

We can best understand the role and place of religion within a state by looking at the role and status of religious education within state schools. The tradition of formal links between religions and governments can be seen mirrored in the status of religious education, but however this can also work in reverse. For example, the USA is a devoutly religious country, with a very high proportion of the population attending places of worship on a regular basis, but yet religious education is banned from schools. Different from this, the Council of Europe wants every state in Europe to have formal religious education even though religious observance has been declining for decades there.

In some countries, religious education is a state subject, taught by qualified teachers who are trained mainly by the state. In Sweden for instance, its purpose is to inform about the role of religion, seen as central to a mature understanding of culture and society, while in others, it may be the part of an agreement with the majority religion, to assure that children become more familiar with the religion of the culture. This is the case in Bahrain, which is a Muslim majority state, and the Dominican Republic, where the majority are Catholics. For example in South Africa, a society which is getting increasingly pluralistic, religious education has been extended to include teaching about other religions as well, not just the majority religion.

¹⁶¹ <http://www.pulsdemokratije.net/index.php?id=1701&l=en>

In many countries religious education is not officially part of the state curriculum. Religious teachers can hold special lessons on school premises, which children can attend only if they want. In India, religious education is optional and it is offered outside of normal school hours, even in schools that are under the authority of the church. In some countries religious education is not allowed within the school curriculum. In USA, the Church and the State are separated by the US constitution, while religious education in China is not allowed because the State is officially atheist. In Eastern European countries and countries of the former USSR, the role of religious education is under close investigation. There is an intense debate in Russia over the role of religious education because some feel that the Orthodox Church should have a role in state education. Currently there is no religious education.

In Western Europe on the other hand, teaching of Christianity, which is the major religion, may still predominate in some countries, while a syllabus may include the study of religions not represented within the population at large. In the world in general, states are tending to move away from narrow and confessional-based syllabuses.¹⁶²

If we look at BiH and Europe, there are some common trends and characteristics when it comes to religious education. Most of the European countries have religious education to some extent, whether obligatory or optional. At the same time both religious and cultural pluralism is increasing in these countries.

There are four different types of programs of religious education being offered in Europe: 1) Confessional religious education. Religious communities are responsible for it in collaboration with state authorities; 2) non-confessional education about religions which is exclusively the responsibility of the state; 3) a combination of the former two, and 4) no religious education at all, as is the case in both Slovenia and France, where this kind of education is specifically forbidden in state schools. In Austria, Switzerland, Belgium and Germany there are different alternatives of religious confessional education. Pupils can also choose alternative subjects such as ethics and philosophy. Simultaneously, in countries like Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Scotland, education about religions is strictly non-confessional and is under state control. These two models are considered to be opposite from one another, but however it is not always like this. It is actually possible for state and religious

¹⁶² O'Brien and Palemr (2007:113-114)

community to have successful collaboration. Concerning the content, training of the teachers, school curriculum etc., we find confessional models that are "models of collaboration" between state offices and religious communities, as is the case for example in Germany, Italy and Austria. Non-confessional models are found in for example England and Wales, and also in Scotland.

Austria can serve as an mixed example because both the above mentioned approaches are combined successfully there. That is, obligatory confessional religious education for different religious communities recognized by state authorities, combined with inclusive education about "Cultures of Religions". Pupils can choose between classes of Catholic religious teaching, Protestant religious teaching, Orthodox religious teaching, New Apostolic Christian religious teaching, Judaism, Islamic religious teaching and Buddhism. Religion is an obligatory subject at schools in Austria, while alternative, non-confessional education about religions has been available since 1997. Even though Austria is multi confessional, it provides protection to religious institutions that are recognized by the law, and protects the right to establish private confessional schools as well as the right to religious education in state schools. Since BiH is also a multi-monotheistic country, Austria could serve as a suitable example for the country when it comes to religious education.¹⁶³

4.9 Aims and tasks of Religious Teaching in BiH

In this part we will first look at the fundamentals of Christianity and Islam in BiH, which both are monotheistic. Afterwards we will look closer at the aims and tasks of religious teaching. Christians believe in one God. He is creator of all things and is considered to be three "persons", the Trinity: God the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit. Everything that exists does so through God. He began Creation at a certain point in time and he will also end it. God created from nothing and everything he creates has meaning and purpose. There are two different approaches in Christianity when it comes to time. The first suggests that through human lives a renewed and peaceful world will be created, that is the Kingdom of God on earth. In the second, the world becomes so full of wrongdoing and suffering that an antichrist appears who brings conflict. Christ then returns and defeats the antichrist in a great battle, introducing the reign of peace. When it comes to life after death, Christians believes in

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http://www.zapravicoobrazovanje.ba/Istrazivanja/8.%20FOD%20religija_i_skolovanje_preispitivanje_bh_modela.pdf

one life only, but beliefs about death vary. One is that the soul may ascend to heaven and be judged by God, and the other one is that the soul and the body may raise on the Day of Judgement, at the end of time, and will be judged then.

Muslims also believe in one God, Allah, which is Arabic for “God”. Allah is indivisible, he has no equals and is the creator of all. He has spoken to humanity through many prophets, of whom Muhammad is the last one. Allah is the creator of everything, he simply says ”Be” and all things exist. He has a purpose for all forms of life within creation. In Islam, time is linear. At the end of time, God will announce the Judgement Day, and the world will end. Everything will be judged on that day. Just like Christians, Muslims also believe that there is only one life. However, after death, the individual awaits the Day of Judgement, when everything will be brought back to life and judged. Paradise is waiting only for those who have lived according to the will of God, while those who have failed to do so will not enter Paradise.¹⁶⁴

In the light of the fundamentals of Christianity and Islam, we will now look at the aims of Islamic and Orthodox religious teaching in the way they were defined in syllabus. The aims of Catholic religious teaching is taken from *Plan and program for Catholic religious teaching in elementary schools*, published by the Episcopal conference BiH.¹⁶⁵

The aims of Islamic religious education are:

- Familiarizing the students with the rules of the Qur’an: the belief in one God, His angels, His revelation through the book, His prophets and the day of Judgment;
- Preparing the students for everyday life in accordance with the Islamic duties: confessing the faith, performing the required prayers and religious discipline (fasting), the religious material duties (zakat), and hajj (pilgrimage);
- Developing a feeling of duty and obligation towards the above mentioned regulations;
- Motivating the students to think about their surroundings;
- Familiarizing the students with the Islamic value system;
- Developing an active and conscious love towards Allah and the Islamic community;
- Familiarizing the students with the arrival and development of Islam in our area, and its material and spiritual heritage.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ O’Brien and Palmer, (2007:86-87)

¹⁶⁵ <http://kotor-network.info/research/joint/2005/BiH.htm#sec3>, p.3

¹⁶⁶ • Upoznavanje učenika sa odredbama Kur’ana: vjerovanje u jednog Boga, Njegove anđele, Njegove objave-knjige, , poslanike i Sudnji dan;

• Osposobljavanje učenika za praktično življenje u skladu sa islamskim dužnostima: očitovanje vjere, obavljanje propisanih molitvi, vjerska discipliniranost (post), vjerske materijalne obaveze (zekat) i hadž (hodočašće);

• Razvijanje osjećaja dužnosti i odgovornosti prema gore navedenim uputama;

It is evident from the points above that the aims of Islamic religious teaching are purely confessional. Students will be prepared for everyday life in accordance with the Islamic duties and will develop a feeling of duty and obligation towards Islamic regulations. Students will be familiarized with the Islamic value system and will develop an active and conscious love towards Allah and the Islamic community. They will also be familiarized with the arrival and development of Islam in our area, and its material and spiritual heritage. It is doubtful what they mean by "our area". Is it BiH as a country or is it just FBiH? However, there is no mention of other religions, nor information about the other religions that coexist with Islam within BiH.

The aims of the Catholic religious education are:

- Developing openness towards the transcendental, as well as an ability to consider the deepest meaning of man's life and the world, in light of their transitory nature and eternity;
- Developing mature and unique, decent and religious persons, as individuals and as social beings, in all aspects of human life: the spiritual and the material;
- Train the ability to understand the messages of the Bible and their connection to everyday life;
- Achieving a Christian conscience in relation to oneself, towards others, society and the world;
- Understanding that God calls on people to live together in peace and friendship;
- Discovering the force of the Church of Jesus as the sacrament of salvation, and making the pupil able to love and serve the Church;
- Getting to know the significance of the history of the Catholic Church, which serves Jesus in various ways among the Croats;
- Developing gratitude for God's unlimited love, and making the pupil able to assist his brother, act for goodness, social justice and solidarity, and to feel mutual gratitude;
- Adopting the total system of Christian moral, that is Christ's law of love and service;
- Experiencing the spiritual power and significance of the liturgy, the sacraments and the religious holidays;
- Acquiring knowledge about those who are different, and developing respect towards other cultures and confessions;
- Understanding the causes of conflicts between parents and children, among people and between nations, and making the pupil able to overcome conflicts and build a harmonious personal and social life;
- Understanding the role of the family for the development of one's personal life, as well as its role in society; creating a sense of responsibility for one's family and for the wider society;

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- Podsticanje učenika da razmišljaju o svom okruženju;
 - Upoznavanje učenika sa islamskim sistemom vrijednosti;
 - Razvijanje aktivne i svjesne ljubavi prema Allahu, dž.š. i islamskoj zajednici;
 - Upoznavanje učenika sa pojavom i razvojem Islama na ovom području, i njegovom materijalnom i duhovnom baštinom. – Ibid.

•Following the Christian path of faith, hope and love, which helps us resist negative temptations and problems in life, especially while we are adolescents.¹⁶⁷

These aims incorporate knowledge and understanding of other religions and cultures in a quite neutral light, which is very positive. We can see this especially in two points. First is about acquiring knowledge about those who are different, and developing respect towards other cultures and confessions. The second is to understand the causes of conflicts among people and between nations, and making the pupil able to overcome conflicts and build a harmonious personal and social life. It is than clear that the aims of Catholic religious education are not just purely confessional.

The aims of Orthodox religious education are:

- Understanding and accepting the divine Trinity as the fundamental Christian truth, as well as Jesus who sacrificed himself for the salvation of mankind;
- Understanding the significance of the Bible through which God has sent his message to all of mankind;
- Understanding that God is the infinite, unlimited and absolute spiritual being;
- Understanding that our knowledge of God is limited, but that we - through a process of purification, enlightenment and delight and rapture in God - can get closer to God, and that God, too, wants to get closer to us, his creation;
- Understanding the Christian message that solves the problems of life and death, morality and sin;

¹⁶⁷ • Razvijanje otvorenosti prema transcendenciji i osposobljavanje za promišljanje najdubljeg smisla ljudskog života i svijeta u odnosu na prolaznost i vječnost;

- Razvijanje zrele i jedinstvene ljudske i religijske ličnosti, na individualnoj i socijalnoj razini, u svim aspektima ljudskog života: duhovnom i materijalnom;
- Razvijanje sposobnosti za razumijevanje biblijskih poruka i njihovo povezivanje sa svakodnevnim životom;
- Postizanje krišćanske svijesti u odnosu prema sebi, drugima, društvu i svijetu;
- Razumijevanje da je Bog pozvao ljude na međusobnu ljubav i prijateljstvo;
- Otkrivanje snage Isusove crkve kao sakramenta spasenja i osposobljavanje učenika da vole i služe crkvi;
- Upoznavanje sa značajem povijesti Katoličke crkve, koja služi Isusu na različite načine u Hrvata;
- Razvijanje zahvalnosti za božansku neograničenu ljubav i osposobljavanje učenika za bratsku službu, dobrotu, socijalnu pravdu, solidarnost i osjećanje uzajamne zahvalnosti;
- Usvajanje cjelokupnog sustava kršćanskog morala, to jest Kristovog zakona ljubavi i služenja;
- Doživljavanje duhovne snage i značaja liturgije, sakramenata i blagdana;
- Sticanje znanja o onima koju su drugačiji, i razvijanje poštovanja prema drugim kulturama i konfesijama;
- Razumijevanje uzroka konflikata između roditelja i djece, ljudi i nacija, i osposobljavanje učenika da prevaziđu konflikte i izgrade harmoničan lični i socijalni život;
- Razumijevanje uloge obitelji u razvoju ličnog i društvenog života, i izgradnja odgovornosti za vlastitu obitelj i širu zajednicu;
- Kretanje kršćanskim putem vjere, nade i ljubavi uz pomoć kojih se odupiremo negativnim iskušenjima i životnim problemima, naročito u doba adolescencije. - Biskupska konferencija Bosne i Hercegovine, 2003:53-55 i <http://kotor-network.info/research/joint/2005/BiH.htm#sec3>, p.4

- Developing the understanding and feeling that the Church, being the body of Christ and filled with the Holy Ghost, unites all people in God's love;
- Including the pupil in the life of the Orthodox Church, the caretaker of the pure and original message of Christ;
- That the pupil will live according to Christ's message, and understand the aims of religious education, not as just a compulsory subject, but as an integral part of his personal development;
- Developing Christian values and virtues such as: modesty, moral purity, generosity, compassion, meekness, and believing with stringency and ardour;
- Using these values in family life, in church and in the state, these being the most important Christian communities;
- Understanding the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church, from medieval times until today, in order to keep and safeguard ones own national and religious identity;
- Enabling the pupil to respect the culture and civilization to which they are the heirs.¹⁶⁸

Here we can see that the aims of Orthodox religious teaching are confessional, i.e. Christian and Orthodox, but also national. This is evident in two points, particularly in the first: “understanding the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church, from medieval times until today, in order to keep and safeguard ones own national and religious identity,” but also in the second: “enabling the pupil to respect the culture and civilization to which they are the heirs.” This can be understood as Christian heirs, Orthodox heirs and Serbian heirs.

If we compare these aims, we can conclude that the aims of Orthodox and Islamic religious education are quite similar, because both are purely confessional, whereas the Orthodox aims

¹⁶⁸ • Razumijevanje i prihvatanje Božjeg trojstva kao osnovne hrišćanske istine, i Isusa koji se žrtvovao za spas čovječanstva;

- Razumijevanje značaja Biblije preko koje je Bog poslao poruku čitavom čovečanstvu;
- Razumijevanje da je Bog beskrajno, neograničeno, apsolutno, duhovno biće;
- Razumijevanje ograničenosti znanja o Bogu, ali se kroz proces očišćenja, prosvjetljenja i ushićenje prema Bogu možemo približiti Bogu, kao i da se Bog želi približiti nama kao svojim tvorevinama;
- Rezumijevanje hrišćanske poruke koja rješava probleme života i smrti, moralnosti i grijeha;
- Razvijanje osjećanja da Crkva, kao tijelo Hristovo i ispunjenje Svetog Duha ujedinjuje sve ljude u božanskoj ljubavi;
- Uključivanje učenika u život Pravoslavne crkve, koja čuva čistu i izvornu Hristovu poruku;
- Život učenika u skladu sa Hristovom porukom, i razumijevanje cilja vjeronauke, ne kao obaveznog predmeta, već kao integralnog dijela ličnog razvoja;
- Razvijanje hrišćanskih vrijednosti i vrlina kao što su smjernost, moralna čistota, darežljivost, milosrđe, krotkost, revnost u vjeri.
- Primjena ovih vrijednosti u porodici, ckrvi i državi kao najvažnijim hrišćanskim zajednicama;
- Razumijevanje istorije Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve, od srednjevjekovnog perioda do danas, radi očuvanja vlastitog nacionalnog i religioznog identiteta;
- Osposobljavanje učenika da poštuju kulturu i civilizaciju čiji su nasljednici. - <http://kotor-network.info/research/joint/2005/BiH.htm#sec3>, p.4

are also national. Contrary to this, the aims of Catholic religious education are not just confessional, but also open towards other religions and cultures, respect and understanding.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Religious Teaching Textbooks

In Bosnia and Herzegovina religious education exists in the public schools, as we have seen, and is based on normative theology. This confessional subject is being taught separately, and segregation between different religious groups is very strong. The subject becomes obligatory when chosen. Curriculum and textbooks are created by the religious communities and can only be bought in churches and mosques. Religious communities are also the ones who are approving teachers for religious teaching. The state is paying teachers, and the Canton of Sarajevo, for example, sets aside nearly 2,3 million convertible marks every year for this.¹⁶⁹ In both entities religious teaching is organized only for the religion of the majority group, while organizing religious teaching for minority groups is differently practised, varying from canton to canton. This school subject has always been thoroughly politicized. Space for the introduction of a neutral and informative subject, which would replace religious education is hard to create.

In this chapter I will analyse the content of religious textbooks for all three religions in BiH. First I will analyse and compare textbooks for the lowest grades. In this case it will be Islamic and Catholic religious textbooks for the third grade and the Orthodox religious textbook for the fourth grade. Afterwards I will analyse and compare all three religious textbooks for the eighth grade.

In short, we can say that Islamic religious textbooks are often confessional in their content, and more theological than the other two. Orthodox religious textbooks have an even more expressed confessional character, while Catholic religious textbooks give the most interesting and comprehensive view of their own religion, but also of religion generally and the other world religions. Below we will first look at the most evident differences, and then look closer at the content and give an extensive analysis and comparison of all the religious textbooks taken as examples here.

5.1 Evident differences

There are some prominent visual differences when one looks at these textbooks. For instance, the Orthodox textbooks are smallest in size, they measure 16,3 x 23,3cm. They are also the thinnest, with approximately 50 pages for each of the three books. They are very simple.

¹⁶⁹

http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/reis_ceric_prijeti_ministru_zbog_odluke_u_vjeronauci/24178688.html

Every chapter in the textbook for the fourth grade is about half a page long and the letters are slightly bigger than the letters in the Orthodox textbooks for the eighth grade. After every chapter in both books there are questions linked to the chapter, and space to answer them. Pictures are also very simple and not many, mostly paintings of religious themes, like icons, saints, the birth of Christ, etc. There are very few photos. Some are in black and white, while most of them are in pastel colours. The quality of most pictures is poor, but the colour quality is best in the textbook for fourth grade. The fourth grade textbook has 28 pictures, in addition to the picture on the cover. Of those three are photos, while the rest are paintings. On the back cover there are two religious songs for children.

The Islamic textbooks are bigger and thicker. The third grade textbook is bigger than the eighth grade textbook. It measures 20 x 26cm with 169 pages, while the textbook for the eighth grade measures 16,4 x 23,3cm and has 200 pages. The last book does not have a picture on the cover, while the first one has a drawing. In both books there are questions after every chapter. In the book for the third grade, there are some other tasks, too, like crosswords, fill-in exercises, spaces to draw in and write in, colouring exercises with Arabic letters, drawings, etc. In the beginning of the book there is a guide with eight different signs for better orientation: "Talk about it", "Consider and complete", "We must know", "Tasks", "Draw and colour", "We learn new words", "Write down" and "Let's pray". There are lots of pictures, more than 150, in the third grade textbook. Most of them are simple drawings, which describe the content of chapters. However there are also some photos. The textbook is colourful, which cannot be said about the two other textbooks. The number of pictures declines, while chapters are getting longer, in the textbook for the eighth grade. There are approximately 50 pictures in the book for the eighth grade.

Finally, the textbooks for Catholic religious teaching are of high paper quality, with modern layout and with bright and clear pictures. Both of them measure 19cm x 26,1cm. The third grade book has 96 pages. There is a painting on the front cover and approximately 100 pictures inside. Some of them are paintings, some are drawings and some photos. After every chapter, there are questions and a section called "For those who want to know more". The textbook for the eighth grade has 183 pages and there is a painting on the cover. That same painting is also on the back of the book, just smaller. In the end of the book there is an index of names and terms. There are 180 pictures. Most of them are photos from real life; people, nature and photos with religious theme. Besides, there are also several maps. There

are many quotations: from the Bible, by philosophers, writers, Popes, different proverbs, unknown authors, etc. These are to be found in margins on almost every page.

As a summary, we can say that the textbooks for Catholic religious teaching are best when it comes to paper quality and picture quality, and they are the most easy to follow. The third grade textbook for Islamic religious education is also easy to follow, since it has a guide in the beginning for how to use the book. Pictures in both textbooks for Islamic religious education are very simple and of poorer quality than those for Catholic religious education. However, the textbooks for Orthodox religious education are the thinnest, simplest, and the pictures have the poorest quality.

5.2 Analyses and comparison of religious textbooks for third grades¹⁷⁰

The Islamic religious textbook for third grade¹⁷¹ consists of eight main chapters and 169 pages. First chapter is called "*Ponovo miris septembra*"¹⁷², chapter II "*Vjerujem u jednog Boga*"¹⁷³, chapter III "*Put do Allahove milosti*"¹⁷⁴, chapter IV "*Bozići poslanici prije Muhammeda, A.S.*"¹⁷⁵, chapter V "*I ja učim Kur'an i dove*"¹⁷⁶, chapter VI "*Ponovo s Muhammedom, A.S.*"¹⁷⁷, chapter VII "*Islamski se ponasam*"¹⁷⁸ and chapter VIII "*Putovanje kroz Bosnu*"¹⁷⁹. In every main chapter there are sub-chapters. However, the main chapter-titles can only be seen in the end of the textbook under "*Content*" on page 168-69. There is no indication inside the textbook showing that a new main chapter begins, and the one before is ending.

Chapters in the the textbook for Catholic religious teaching are quite similarly organized. The book has 96 pages. Here, there are 7 main chapters with sub-chapters. A table of contents may be found at the end of the textbook, on page 95-96. A difference here is that the main chapters are visible in the textbook and clearly separate chapters from one another. Chapter I

¹⁷⁰ Except the textbook for Orthodox religious teaching, which is for the fourth grade

¹⁷¹ Pleh, Mina., Tinjak, Muamer., Nežirovac, Melika., (2008). *Vjeronauka za treći razred osnovne škole*. Sarajevo, El-Kalem

¹⁷² "Again, the smell of September"

¹⁷³ "I believe in one God"

¹⁷⁴ "Path to Allah's mercy"

¹⁷⁵ "God's prophets before Muhammed, A.S."

¹⁷⁶ "I too learn the Koran and prayers"

¹⁷⁷ "Again with Muhammed, A.S."

¹⁷⁸ "I behave in the Islamic way"

¹⁷⁹ "Journey through Bosnia"

is "Bog – tajna naseg zivota"¹⁸⁰, chapter II "Isus je s nama"¹⁸¹, chapter III "Bog je nas spasitelj"¹⁸², chapter IV "Bog je dosao medu ljude"¹⁸³, chapter V "Isusov poziv na pomirenje"¹⁸⁴, chapter VI "U Euharistiji – Isus je medu nama"¹⁸⁵ and chapter VII "Izborne teme"¹⁸⁶.

In the textbook for Orthodox religious education "Content" is in the beginning of the book. There are no chapters, but rather 34 short lessons. The book has 54 pages. The first lesson is about God's Ten Commandments, the next ten lessons are about each of the commandments. There are also lessons about Commandments from the New Testament, about Christian faith in general, the ancestry and origins of Orthodox faith, about the Scripture and its origins, about confession of Christian faith, then ten lessons about twelve symbols of the faith. There are also lessons about the sacraments, or "Holy Mysteries": the sacraments of baptism, anointing, regret, ordination, matrimony and unction of the sick. At the end of the book, there is a hymn dedicated to Saint Sava.¹⁸⁷

In the beginning of the Islamic textbook, on page 4, there is a short text where the authors of the book speak directly to the children. First they are greeting the children with the Islamic greeting "Es Selamu Aleikum"¹⁸⁸. They are welcoming the pupils to the new school-year, by saying "There is a new school-year in front of us, if it is God's will", and are happy to be together again through religious education classes. They are also telling what "we" are going to learn and ending this little text by asking Almighty Allah to ease "our" job. As we can see, this is a quite simple welcome message to the pupils, and God is present through the whole text.

In the textbook for Catholic religious education there is a foreword as well. However, this one is quite a bit longer, and is written not by the authors, but by Bishop Ratko Peric. He is not only addressing himself to the students, but also to the parents and to the teachers of religious

¹⁸⁰ "God – the secret of our life"

¹⁸¹ "Jesus is with us"

¹⁸² "God is our saviour"

¹⁸³ "God came among people"

¹⁸⁴ "Jesus's call on reconciliation"

¹⁸⁵ "In the Eucharist – Jesus is among us"

¹⁸⁶ "Elective topics"

¹⁸⁷ English: Saint Sava; 1174 – 14 January 1236, was a Serbian Prince and Orthodox monk, the first Archbishop of the autocephalous Serbian Church. - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Sava

¹⁸⁸ "Peace be with you"

education. Briefly, he is saying that the pupils will meet and get to know Jesus Christ, who confers upon us his peace and forgiveness. He is also saying that this year of the pupils' life is quite special, since they will for the first time in their life partake in the Holy Communion, receive the body of Jesus Christ, and they will also celebrate the sacrament of forgiveness in their parish community. The religious textbook for third grade will help them on their journey, when socializing with others, learning and growing spiritually. He is further telling pupils that the textbook will also enable them to grow in a spirit of togetherness and respect, and to learn about love and peace from God's Son, Jesus Christ who is our Saviour and friend, who gives us his Body and his peace. In this way we can be his bright and glad friends. To the parents, the bishop is telling that school and church are two inseparable places for the religious education of the children. Parents are invited to participate in promoting their children's growth and happiness, and to help them on their path towards human and Christian maturity. They are also invited to be examples, to help and support their children with testimony of their own Christian life. The religious textbook for the third grade is just one part of the enrichment that the Church wants to offer their children.

In the end, he is speaking to the teachers of religion, telling them what a special blessing, task and responsibility they have this school year. They are invited to discover secret of Christ's word and Body together with the pupils.

This message is longest one. If we compare with the other two, it is quite a bit longer than the messages in both the Islamic and Orthodox textbooks. It was not only the pupils who were addressed here, but also the parents and teachers, as opposed to the Islamic and Orthodox religious textbooks where only the pupils were addressed. This message is also different in another way, it seems more serious and it goes more into depth. Here importance is put on the children's first holy sacrament and what they should expect in this case. Importance is also given to how the textbook is going to help them in their socializing with others, learning and spiritual growing, and how they are going to grow in togetherness and respect and learn about love and peace. Here we get the impression that tolerance and respect for others, as well as for other religions, is important, which is very positive, but at the same time we can't be certain since it is ambiguous.

In the part where the parents were addressed the Bishop was stressing how the school and the church are two inseparable places for religious education of the children. This is different from the general principle of the European democratic tradition, namely that state and church are separate spheres. Religious instruction should be the domain of the Church and other religious institutions, and not take place in the public schools. Public schools should be

outside the sphere of religious teaching and practice, especially because BiH is a multi-ethnic country.

In the Orthodox religious education textbooks it is little bit different. There, there is also a message to the pupils, but it is on the last page of the textbook. The message is written by the Bishop, who wishes that the children, together with their teachers, have gotten to know God's law. The children should be happy that they have had religious education and learned from it during the school year. They should be happy that they became good children of the Heavenly Creator. Further he is saying that "we" are delighted on your behalf, because you became a decoration of this world, decoration of our ancestry and decoration of our holy Church by learning Orthodox religion. Bishop and the others are especially glad that from day to day children are becoming good children of their parents and exemplary pupils of their teachers, and all this because they are attending religious teaching classes.

We see here that to be a good child of the Heavenly Creator, a happy child and exemplary pupil is associated with having Orthodox religious education and learning to know God's law. The Bishop and "others" who we don't know who are, are delighted on the pupils' behalf, because they became a decoration of this world, but also a pride to "our" ancestry and Holy Church. Our ancestry can be interpreted as being of Serbian ancestry, which in other words is telling pupils that they belong to Serbian nation.

Textbook for Islamic religious teaching

The Islamic textbook for the third grade seeks to teach the children about basic elements of Islam and about Islamic morals and norms of behaviour, like "*Islam is everything to me,*" from page eight, where they learn about meaning of Islam and about the five pillars of Islam, the Islamic duties. Those five pillars are: 1) giving testimony that there is no other God but Allah and that Mohammed is His slave and His messenger, 2) practicing of the *namaz*¹⁸⁹, 3) fasting during Ramadan, 4) giving of *zekat*¹⁹⁰ and 5) doing the *Hadz*¹⁹¹. All this is done with help of verses and quotation from Qur'an and stories about the life of the prophet Mohamed. It is also done with help from stories from everyday life, which are linked with Islamic teaching and with Islamic prayers.

¹⁸⁹ *Namaz* is an Arab word and means Islamic prayer and consists of five daily prayers where one bows while praying.

¹⁹⁰ *Zekat* is an Arab word and means to give a fixed portion of one's wealth to charity which is generally the poor ones and those in need.

¹⁹¹ *Hadz* is an Arab word and means one who made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Every Muslim is obliged to make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime if he or she can afford it.

The main aim of this textbook is to teach children how to become true Muslims, and there is also a lesson with this same name on page 14. Using adjective "true" implies that there are also those who are not true Muslims, and if you do not follow what the textbook is saying, then there is a possibility that maybe you will not become a true Muslim. However, one becomes a true Muslim by obeying the duties that are appointed by Allah, and if we subject ourselves to Allah, only then are we becoming true Muslims, and Allah will love us. Further it says that Islam is "our" way of life. He is a Muslim, who believes and does good deeds, who helps others, who takes care of the elderly and weak. A Muslim is he who doesn't wish anything bad on anybody, and who with his own acts wants to attain the appreciation of Allah. The lesson finishes with "We are proud to be Muslims".

Islam also demands from Muslims that they develop their noble characteristics, so that they can be good believers. This includes greeting your Muslim brothers, because greetings increase the love between the people. In the first part we see that the emphasis is made on greeting, as one of Muslims' noble characteristics, but it includes only greeting Muslims brothers, not the others, while in the last part it says that greeting increases the love between the people. What is implied by "people"? Is it all people, meaning also those who are not Muslims?

Secondly, one who believes is showing his love and respect to his parents, he respects his family and maintains family relations by offering them help and making them happy. The third point is that Islam requires from adherents that they be generous and help the poor. As a fourth point, it says that those who believe sincerely, regularly perform *namaz*. Children begin to pray when they turn 7 years, but sometimes also earlier. They perform every *namaz* regularly when they turn 10 years. They often go to the mosque to be able to perform *namaz* there. We can see from this that Islam also has a parenting role in this way, telling what is expected from children and how they should behave. It also indirectly tells when and how often children should pray if they are to be considered as true and sincere believers.

The obligation of every Muslim is to believe in Allah, because Allah is the Creator of everything. He created oceans, mountains, rivers, animals, humans and plants. On page 26, there is a lesson "Nature – Testimony of Gods Existence" where the main message is that we always have to give our gratitude to Allah because he created everything that surrounds us. This lesson is all about the existence of Allah, and how every creature bears evidence of his existence, but it doesn't say what this evidence is. In the end there is an exercise "Look at and conclude," where there are three questions. The first is "Look at the birds! Do you see

evidence of Allah's power and greatness in the shape of their body?" Second is "Look at the sky! Do you see evidence of Allah's power and existence in its shape?" The third question is "Look at the fish! Do you see evidence of Allah's power and existence in their body?" The next three lessons are almost the same, about how Allah created plants and animals, and that Allah loves those who behave nobly towards His creatures.

On page 36, however, there is a lesson "The human being as the most beautiful creature of Allah". We humans, are created in the most beautiful shape, and are given a special place. We got gifts, such as knowledge, strength, dignity and reason. Our hearing, eyesight, reason and speech are testimony of Allah's creation.

This part about Allah creating everything around us, giving us knowledge, reason and everything else, is quite problematic because it is contrary to what children are learning in biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics, which, as we know, are scientific subjects. In biology children learn about Darwin and evolutionary theory, which is totally opposite of what they learn in religious classes. We also know that scientific subjects are based on knowledge, which is acquired with the help of scientific methods. For knowledge to be regarded as science, it has to be verifiable. This means that one should be able to reject earlier findings on the basis of new observations, experiments or reasoning. Religion, on the other hand, is not verifiable, because it requires beliefs that are irrational, unreasonable, lacking scientific and rational foundations.¹⁹² Religious teaching is translated to *vjeronauka* in Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. *Vjeronauka*, originates from the word *vjera* which means belief and the word *nauka* which means "science". Right here we can see how this is controversial. Religious knowledge, according to those who practice religion, can only be gained from religious leaders, sacred texts, and if one has had a personal revelation. Such knowledge is unlimited in scope and suited to answer every question. At the same time it is absolute and infallible.

Chapter three is about *namaz* and six *namaz*-criteria. Body, cloths and place have to be clean in order to pray. Every Muslim has to pray five times a day. When children turn 10 years they cannot leave out any of the prayers. It is important to pray on exact time every day and to turn towards Kaba¹⁹³, in Mecca. It is also put emphasis on the Ramadan, since Allah is particularly gracious during this month. There is also a picture of how a city should look like during the

¹⁹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_religion

¹⁹³ Kaba is first house build on the Earth in the name of Allah

month of Ramadan. As we can see on the picture bellow, every woman and little girl has a hijab.



Chapter four is about prophets before Mohammed. There is a lesson about Adam as the first man on the Earth, how Allah created him of soil and gave him a life. In the end of this lesson it is said that Adam and his wife Hava had sons, Kabil and Habil, and their sisters, and how the whole human race originates from them. What can be problematic is that Allah is represented not only as a God, but also as the only, and true God. We can find an example of this on the pages 79-80, in a story about the people of Ad who lived in big palaces and were rich, but instead of thanking Allah for this, they were thanking the statues of Semud and Alhatar. Allah then sent the prophet Hud who tried to tell the people of Ad to believe in Allah, and not to be the slaves of stones, but the people of Ad didn't listen. In the end, Allah sendt strong winds, which demolished houses and uprooted trees, and the people of Ad were destroyed while Hun and his followers were saved. In the end of this lesson, under "*We must know*" it says "Allah will punish violators and those who do evil, but he will award those who believe and do good deeds."¹⁹⁴ This sentence per se is not problematic. What is problematic is the context with this story, where a parallel is drawn between violators and the people of Ad, just because they didn't believed in Allah. A parallel is also drawn between violators and those who do evil, and between believers and those who do good deeds. Does this automatically means that only those who believe in Allah are able to do good deeds?

Chapter five is about the Qur'an and prayers. There are prayers for different occasions. Emphasis is put on how important is to learn the Qur'an and taking *abdest*¹⁹⁵. There is a lesson about how we should prepare ourselves for addressing Allah. In this story, on page 88, a mother is telling her son about the importance of prayers. Among other things she is telling

¹⁹⁴ "Allah, dz.s., kaznit ce nasilnike i one koji cine zlo, a nagraditi one koji vjeruju i cine dobra djela."

¹⁹⁵ Islamic act of washing parts of the body using water for ritual prayers and for handling and reading Qur'an. - <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/abdest>

him that Allah knows what is useful and what is harmful for him, even better than she knows him, even though she is his mother¹⁹⁶.

The lesson on page 92, is about the Qur'an, and how important it is to read in it on a daily basis and to follow its directives. The picture bellow, shows Qur'an' special place in a home.



On the bottom of this page, there is a short text, which is written in italic letters and can look like a poem. After reading this it becomes obvious that what one should strive for is to resemble an orange;

”The believer who learns from the Qur'an resembles an orange – it has a lovely smell, and its taste is nice.

The believer who doesn't learn from the Qur'an resembles a date – it doesn't have smell, but its taste is sweet.

A false person who learns from the Qur'an resembles sweet basil, it has nice smell but its taste is bitter.

A false person who doesn't learn from the Qur'an – resembles the wild squash. It doesn't smell and its taste is bitter too.”¹⁹⁷

We communicate with our Creator through prayer and ask from Him what we want. But for Allah to accept our prayers, we have to be His honest and devoted slaves. We send our prayers to Allah honestly and with a lot of respect.

Chapter six is about Mohammed, his life, his friends, and First Proclamation. There is a story on page 111, where a little boy asks his mother to tell him about how Mohammed received the First Proclamation. Before she starts telling the story, she tells him that at that time people in Mecca worshiped statues, that they had lots of bad habits, were arguing, stealing, gambling and killing each other¹⁹⁸. Mohammed was sent to all of mankind to bring them from the dark

¹⁹⁶ ”Sine, Allah, dz.s., zna tebe i tvoje zelje. On zna ono sto je korisno i stetno za tebe, cak bolje od mene, koja sam ti majka.”

¹⁹⁷ ” Vjernik koji uci Kur'an slican je narandzi – ima lijep miris, a njezin okus je lijep.

Vjernik koji ne uci Kur'an, slican je hurmi – nema mirisa, ali je njen okus sladak.

Dvolicnjak koji uci Kur'an slican je bosiljku, ima lijep miris, ali mu je okus sladak.

Dvolicnjak koji ne uci Kur'an – slican je divljoj tikvici. Ona nema mirisa, a i okus joj je gorak.”

¹⁹⁸ ”Omere, u to vrijeme ljudi u Mekki su obozavali kipove. Imali su mnogo raznih navika. Stalno su se svadali. Ubijali su jedni druge, krali i kockali.”

into the light. This can indicate that bad habits, arguing, stealing etc. is something that is not happening anymore.

Chapter seven is about Islamic behaviour. Allah loves that we are good, clever, clean, hardworking, careful, tidy and well mannered. Emphasis is on being clean and taking care of our health, because health is the biggest wealth we have. One should eat healthy and eat at proper. If we get sick, we should go to the doctor, but also pray to Allah to get well. Allah has a cure for every illness.¹⁹⁹ This is very simply explained, and not elaborated in the textbook. This *hadis*²⁰⁰ was not complete. God's prophet actually said: "For every illness Allah created a cure. Some know this cure, but some doesn't." In other version it is said: "Allah has given cure and prevention for every illness but one, and that is Age." This regards "illnesses of the heart, soul and body".²⁰¹

When it comes to food there are also rules. To be healthy, one has to eat healthy food. Healthy and allowed food is fruits and vegetables that are not sprayed with chemicals, meat butchered in Gods name, cereals, milk and milk products. Allah knows best what is healthy and good for our health. Food that is not clean harms our health and that is why Allah forbids us to eat the meat of pigs, donkeys, crows, dogs, frogs, eagles and snakes. Under this text there are simple drawing of these animals, but the crow is missing. Instead there is a drawing of a cat.

There is also a lesson about the importance of performing sports, and how sports are important for our development. Mohammed is encouraging us to engage in sports because it is good against stress, and helps us to release negative energy. Even Mohammed himself liked to run, throw stones and ride horses.

Muslims should also give privilege to the right side instead of left side. When one wakes up, one should pray and then first step on the right foot. We should step into the bathroom with left foot and step out of the bathroom with right foot. When entering a house, we should enter with the right foot. When writing we should give privilege to the right hand, except if we are left-handed. When getting dressed, we should give privilege to the right side. When putting on

¹⁹⁹ "Ako se razbolimo, trebamo se lijeciti i moliti Allaha, dz.s., za ozdravljenje. Allah,dz.s., za svaku bolest dao je lijek."

²⁰⁰ Hadis (or Hadith) is the collection of biographic reports about the sayings, customs and doings of Mohammed and his companions; they also reflect on what Mohammed enjoined and tolerated in his presence or forbade. - <http://www.answering-islam.org/Nehls/Ask/sunnah.html>

²⁰¹ <http://www.putvjernika.com/forum/ostalo/za-svaku-bolest-postoji-lijek-t1154.html>

shoes, we should first get on the right shoe, and then the left, but when getting of shoes, one should first take off the left shoe and then the right.²⁰²

It is also important to know how to behave at home, because home is the most beautiful and most important place in our life. It says on page 144, that when it's cold outside, it is warm in the house. It would be difficult to imagine our life without a house or a flat. There is also a drawing of a simple, furnished living room in a typical traditional old Bosnian house. There is a wooden seat along the walls with three pillows on it and there is a carpet on the floor and a wooden table. On the walls there are *tespih*²⁰³, a calendar with a picture of a mosque and a picture with Arabic letters. The drawing can be interpreted as an indication of what a Muslim home should look like and we can see it here.

The last chapter in this textbook is chapter eight, and it is about traveling through Bosnia. In the first lesson, "*My homeland, Bosnia and Herzegovina*", it is explained briefly that Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs, Jews, Roma and other nations live in BiH. Natural attractions are mentioned. It is also said that BiH has many cultural monuments, but only those with a connection to Islam are mentioned. Afterwards the text says that: "My homeland is well-known for different cultures and their mutual respect". At the end of this lesson a verse from the supporter anthem of the BiH national football team is presented.

In the lesson, "*The story of Sarajevo*", the churches were, however, mentioned in one sentence, which is very positive in my opinion, since Sarajevo is a multi-cultural and multi-religious city. The text states that "there are also churches in Sarajevo, and how nice it is when sometimes you can hear the church bell and *ezans*²⁰⁴ from minaret at the same time." Nevertheless, it should be noticed that it wasn't mentioned which churches exist in Sarajevo, i.e. Catholic and Orthodox.

Third lesson, "*Proud Bosniak*", is a story told by a man, called Alija, about his love for his homeland, BiH. He is most proud to belong to a nation filled with pride and defiance. A nation that was ready to respond to different difficulties and disasters through all this years. Alija is telling that different cultures and nations passed through his Bosnia. Right afterwards he tells that he is proud when he can show somebody different cultural monuments. He also names about ten cultural monuments, but all of them were built under Ottoman Empire and

²⁰² "Muslimani daju prednost desnoj strani u odnosu na lijevu. Kad se probudis, prouci Bismillu i prvo stani na desnu nogu. U kupatilo udji lijevom nogom a izadji desnom! Kad ulazis u kucu, udji desnom nogom! Kad pises, daj prednost desnoj ruci, osim ako nisi ljevak! Kad se oblacis, daj prednost desnoj strani! *Kad jedete, jedite desnom rukom, a kad pijete, pijte desnom rukom!* (hadis) *Kada obuvate obucu prvo obujte desnu nogu, pa lijevu, a kada skidate obucu skinite prvo lijevu, pa desnu!* (hadis)"

²⁰³ Prayer beads

²⁰⁴ Calling for the prayer

are connected to Islam. Since it was emphasized that different cultures and nations passed through Bosnia, monuments from the Austria-Hungarian period could also have been mentioned, like for the instance The City Hall of Sarajevo. He finishes by saying that he is proud to be a Bosniak. Here it is clearly visible how religion defines nationality in BiH. In this example, being Bosniak means being Muslim and belonging to Islamic faith, and vice versa. Finally, in the end of a lesson about the "Old bridge of Mostar", it is said that alongside the Old Bridge, stands the Sultan-Selimov Mesdzid²⁰⁵, which does not have a minaret²⁰⁶. Instead, the Old Bridge was used as minaret. The question here is, is it necessary to link the Old Bridge with Islam and Muslims? It is true that the original Old Bridge²⁰⁷ was built during Ottoman Empire and was used for *ezans*²⁰⁸ and it is in its place to make this parallel. But, on the other side, the Old Bridge is also a cultural monument of the country Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country that is home to three different nations. All three nations should feel that the Old Bridge belongs to them. However, I feel that today the Old Bridge is linked only to the Bosniaks, Muslims and Islam. Matters like these are quite ticklish and should be dealt with with the greatest possible care, precisely because they are not helping the already complicated relationship between the three nations and religions.

Textbook for Orthodox religious teaching

The textbook for Orthodox religious education starts with the lesson about the Ten Commandments. The third commandment is "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."²⁰⁹ God's name is sacred and it should not be used unsuitably. There is a negative example of Jews here. It is said that they used God's name in false cursing. Jews were often blasphemous and used Gods name in swearing, like many do also today. The eighth commandment is "Do not steal". Also here the Jews are used as an example. This time it is said that the Jews lived in Egypt as slaves and that robbery was quite widespread there. Egyptians were stealing from others, but especially from the Jews. Since the Jews lived among the Egyptians, they became infected by this vice and began to steal from each other.

²⁰⁵ Place where Muslims practice namaz. It is quite similar to a mosque, but unlike the mosque it can be built in the apartment building or elsewhere. It is usually built in the settlements or urban centres without mosque. For instance, mesdzid can be found in shopping centres.

²⁰⁶ Mosque tower

²⁰⁷ The original Old Bridge stood for 427 years, until it was destroyed on 9 November 1993 during the war in BiH.

Responsible for the destruction of the bridge is the Croatian Defence Council (HVO) who bombarded the bridge until it collapsed.

²⁰⁸ The call to prayer

²⁰⁹ Ne uzimaj uzalud imena Gospoda Boga svoga.

These two examples, from the third and eighth commandments are entirely unnecessary and can almost seem anti-Semitic.

In the lesson about Christian faith in general, it is pointed out that "we acquire true knowledge about the secrets of God, life and the world, through believing in Christ, and not by making efforts on our own." In the end of this lesson, it says that the Christian faith is above all other religions since it gives absolute answers on all questions about faith and life. Here it is possible to see a direct favouring of Christianity. This is problematic, in view of the fact that there is another monotheistic religion in Bosnia, namely Islam. This can be interpreted to imply that Islam is subordinated in relation to Christianity.

We can find quite similar example on page 40, in the lesson about the symbols of faith, where the Orthodox Christian faith indirectly is made superior to other religions. In the end of this lesson, there is quotation from Matthew 28,19: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."²¹⁰.

At the end of the textbook for the third grade, there is an "Anthem about Saint Sava".²¹¹ Saint Sava was Serbian Prince and Orthodox monk. He is the founder of the Serbian Church, the Serbian state and Serbian education. He died in the Bulgarian city of Trnovo in 1235. His remains were burned in 1594, in Belgrade, by Sinan Pasha, who led an Ottoman army. Saint Sava was canonized by the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1775.²¹² There is a common belief among the Serbs that "Turks burned the remains of Saint Sava in order to destroy the faith and all the influence that he has on Serbs."²¹³ Saint Sava's day is marked at all schools in Serbia and Republika Srpska (RS) as the school *slava*²¹⁴. This celebration of Serbian national myth at all schools in RS is quite problematic, since there are also two other nationalities who live and go to school in RS. The feast day of St.Sava is very nationalistic in its character and its main goal is to promote Serbian nationalism. This is the clear example of interference of church in the public sphere.

Textbook for Catholic religious education

The approach of the Catholic textbook for the third grade is quite confessional, but at the same time it is written critically. There are lots of illustrations, photos, quotations from the Bible, poems and stories. Through all this, the Catholic textbook gives a comprehensive, quite

²¹⁰ "Idite, dakle, i naucite sve narode krsteci ih u ime Oca i Sina i Svetoga Duha" (Mt.28,19)

²¹¹ "Himna Svetom Savi"

²¹² <http://www.istorijskabiblioteka.com/art:sveti-sava>

²¹³ "Smarta se da su Turci mosti Svetog Save spalili u uverenju da ce tako unistiti veru i svaki njegov uticaj na Srbe." - <http://www.vesti-online.com/Vesti/Srbija/112904/Sveti-Sava-i-danas-okuplja-Srbe>

²¹⁴ Feast day of St.Sava

interesting and more objective view of Catholicism. However, the emphasis is put on the Bible, Virgin Mary, the prophets and Jesus Christ.

Whole chapter III is about the Jews in Egypt, and how Moses saved them with help of God. The Jews were presented as a people in need and a people who was unjustly treated by Egyptians. As opposed to the Orthodox textbook, where the Jews were presented in negative way, here the were Jews presented quite positively.

On page 33, in Chapter III, there is a lesson about how God never forgets his own nation, meaning the Jews and how they received help from the God to cross the Red Sea.

Furthermore, the parallel is drawn to our days, where people also overcome difficulties of their own with the help of God. The example of this is Marko, a child who was born during the war in Croatia and who wrote "You can't do anything to me, because I am the child of peace and love. I wished for peace more than everything, I prayed to God that the war wouldn't come and that I could freely play with other children. I prayed to God that the school bell would ring once again, even though I don't like school that much. That is why I say to them: You can't do anything to me, not with rifles, nor with bombs and grenades. I am for love and peace, because they overcome all wars in the world."²¹⁵ The first thing that caught my eye was the formulation "during the war in Croatia", even though this is a textbook for children in BiH. Making the connection to Croatia is important, in order to establish and maintain the link between being a Bosnian Catholic and, at the same time, belonging to the Croatian nation, i.e. Croatia. This can be interpreted as promoting Croatian nationalism, to make Catholic children identify more with the Croatian nation and Croatia, than with BiH, the country where they live.

Secondly, it is a little problematic to understand how Marko, a child who was born during the war in Croatia, can speak about war, when he was only a baby? When Marko says, "That is why I say to them: You can't do anything to me...", who does he mean by "you"?

Considering that the war in Croatia was started by the Serbs, it is then obvious that Marko is addressing himself to the Serbs. In my opinion this is not an appropriate example for this lesson since it is contradictory.

We can find a similar example in the chapter V, on page 66, in the lesson "Let the dreams return". The text is about how "we, Christians, believe that Jesus won over death through the Resurrection." Good has won over evil. Light has won over darkness. But sometimes, it

²¹⁵ "Ne mogu mi nista jer sam dijete mira i ljubavi. Vise od svega zelio sam mir, molio Boga da rata ne bude i da se mogu slobodno igrati s drugom djecom. Molio sam Boga da skolsko zvono opet zazvoni, iako skolu bas i ne volim. Porucujem im: Ne mozete mi nista, ni puskama, ni bombama, ni granatama. Ja sam za ljubav i mir sto pobjedjuje sve ratove na svijetu."

seems like we cannot escape the evil. It seems like evil is stronger than us. However, Christ has resurrected, he won over evil. Further, the text states that: "during difficult times, we can at least pray, like the little girl Ivana does during the war in the Republic of Croatia. We believe, our prayers will be granted. The little girl Ivana prays: "God, with your gentle hands, stop the war. Let the dreams return to the children's pillows." Again there is an example from the war in Croatia, whereas this textbook is for children in Bosnia. Secondly, why is it important to take examples from the war in this religious education textbook?

These two are the single negative examples from this textbook. Otherwise, the textbook is quite objective. Through the whole textbook there is an emphasis on love towards God and Jesus, but also love towards other people. The emphasis is also on Jesus' call for reconciliation, opportunities for new beginnings, and giving people second chances. Jesus encourages different relations towards sinners, sick and poor, and also women and children. He is teaching that all the people are equal. Although, it is not explicitly said who "other people" are, so it can be all people, regardless of their religion, but it also leaves the possibility open that "other people" are only the Catholics. This probably depends on the teachers and how they interpret such matters when teaching the pupils.

5.3 Analysis and comparison of religious education textbooks for the eighth grade

The Islamic textbook for the eighth grade²¹⁶ consists of 31 chapters and has 200 pages. The table of contents is not complete. One page is missing, and it ends with chapter 27 and page 151. The list of contents is in the end of the textbook.

In Orthodox textbook²¹⁷, the list of contents is in the beginning of the book. There are 23 chapters and 46 pages.

The Catholic textbook²¹⁸ consists of 7 chapters and has 183 pages. The list of contents is in the end of the textbook. This textbook is the only one that also has a foreword, where the bishop addresses himself to the pupils, telling them how an important period of their life is finished, and that new roads and challenges are in front of them. One of these is the choice of upper secondary education. He advises them to make that choice by being open towards the

²¹⁶ Sulejmanovic., Kapetanovic., (2005) *Vjeronauka za osmi razred osnovne skole*, Sarajevo, El-Kalem

²¹⁷ Stojanovic., (2006) *Pravoslavna vjeronauka za VIII razred osnovne skole*, Katihetski odbor, Banja Luka

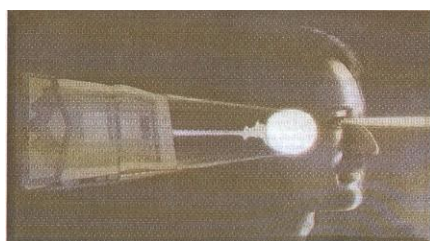
²¹⁸ Peris., (2007) *S Kristom u zivot – Udzbenik za katolicki vjeronauk osmoga razreda osnovne skole*, Krscanska sadasnjest Zagreb - Sarajevo

Holy Spirit, who will help the pupils choose right, they will also be helped by their prayer and by collaborating with their parents.

Textbook for Islamic religious teaching

Through the whole textbook for the eighth grade, the emphasis is on what is *halal* (obligatory) and what is *haram* (prohibited). One should avoid everything that is forbidden and obey everything that is mandatory. The Islamic view of religion takes into consideration good deeds as the key elements of the religion. In the context of Islam, good deeds are firstly performing the rituals like prayer, fast, giving alms, *hajj*²¹⁹, *zekat*²²⁰. Secondly, abiding the religious regulations about halal and haram behaviour, and this includes ethics, values and good behaviour. These are the basic obligations of every Muslim man and woman. However, on page 55, it says that any person who is failing to consistently perform the abovementioned obligations cannot call himself a Muslim.²²¹ On page 57, one can read about the importance of *namaz* (the prayer). *Namaz* is the best evidence of belief in or estrangement from Islam. Not performing the *namaz* means breaking the connection with Allah, something that must not happen to a prudent Muslim.²²²

One whole chapter is about the Qur'an, Allah's book. The Qur'an is the book that, in all its particularities, surpasses the power and strength of the human intellect. On page 17, one can read that the Qur'an is the most read book in the world, and that it is not in contradiction with what science has in recent times established and duly proved. Further, on page 18, it says that the enemies of Islam tried to darken the light of Islam. Some have said that Qur'an is *sihr*.²²³ In the end all of them were disappointed and humiliated because of the Qur'an's precious divine origin. At the bottom of this page is this picture: "Only through the Qur'an one can see clearly".



²¹⁹ Pilgrimage to Mecca

²²⁰ Paying taxes on surplus personal property

²²¹ "Svaka osoba koja dosljedno ne izvršava pomenute obaveze ne može za sebe tvrditi da je musliman."

²²² "Namaz je najbolji dokaz vjerovanja ili udaljavanja od Islama...Ne obavljati namaz znači prekinuti vezu sa Allahom, što se razboritom muslimanu ne smije desiti."

²²³ Deception and magic

The Quran is the book for all times, for all people and for all occasions. It is the Holy Book, which is both mathematics and philosophy, science and guidance to man, and more.²²⁴ Here one can get the impression that one does not need anything else but the Qur'an. This can be confirmed by statement of Allah's prophet on page 184, "Do you know what benefit you have of Theology, apologetics, medicine, astronomy, metrics, grammar and syntax? Just studying these branches of science would mean pointlessly wasting your life."

The Qur'an is unique in its style and composition and cannot be adequately translated into a foreign language. Therefore, everything taught from the Qur'an, has to be in Arabic. This sets the Qur'an apart from other holy scriptures. In Christianity, for example, liturgy can be performed in the native language. Further more, also on the page 29, it says that non-Muslims are getting more and more interested in the Qur'an, because of its diverse and compelling content and due to the increasing role of Islamic world.

Muslims should also take care of their health and their life, because it is a prerequisite for the exercise of their human and religious duties. Allah has therefore said in the Qur'an: "No matter what misery befalls you, it is because of the sins that you have earned."²²⁵ Tobacco, smoking, alcohol, drugs and gambling are listed as harmful and therefore strictly prohibited by Islam. Alcohol is described as the mother of all evils and it is said that society is seriously threatened by it. Arriving at the moon, modern humanity has proven its power, but it failed to destroy alcohol. Only Islam did that, fourteen centuries ago, by condemning alcohol to death for the purpose of human peace and humanity.²²⁶

Islam is also a religion of external and internal cleanliness. In order to achieve this purity, it is best to follow religious rules, and especially to regularly perform *namaz*. Personal hygiene is very important, as well as clean clothes, clean place of residence, clean gardens, clean streets and clean mosques. In Muslim villages and towns there has always been a lot of water, flowers and greenery. In the end of this lesson it is said that "The more Islamic enlightenment – the more health and prosperity."²²⁷

Chapter 17 is about relations between man and woman. Marriage is the only valid and permissible form of partnership between man and woman. To arrive to a marriage among

²²⁴ Sulejmanovic., Kapetanovic., (2005:21)

²²⁵ Ibid., p.73

²²⁶ Ibid., p.79

²²⁷ Ibid., pp.85-89

young people, to be more precise, between a young man and a young woman, they must first socialize and get to know each other. Islamic laws and tradition do not recognize courting, but it recognizes *asikovanje*²²⁸ and meetings. Any physical contact before marriage between persons who engage in *asikovanje* is strictly forbidden. The motivation during *asikovanje* cannot be anything else but marriage.

Further, it is stressed that a Muslim man cannot marry a woman who is a non-believer or polytheist, and neither can a Muslim woman marry a non-Muslim man, a person who denies the existence of Allah, or is a polytheist.²²⁹ In principle, Islam permits a Muslim man to marry a Christian or Jew woman, but a Muslim woman can only marry a Muslim man. The reasons for this are many. When a Muslim woman comes to the house of a husband who is not a Muslim, she meets there with different customs and traditions that are un-Islamic: alcohol, pork and the way of dressing. All this inevitably affects her behaviour. An environment like this does not allow her to act Islamic, and more important, to raise the children in the Islamic way.

However, even though a Muslim man can marry a non-Muslim woman, it is unpopular, because in this way he would neglect a Muslim woman.²³⁰

Chapter 19 is about nutrition. Allah demands from people that they eat only *halal* (allowed) foods. There are also foods that it is not allowed to eat, and this kind of food is called *haram* (prohibited) food. *Haram* foods are meat and meat products from the following animals: pig, cat, dog, wolf, fox, bear, eagle, hawk, etc. It is also *haram* to eat the blood of any animal, meat from animals that have died of themselves, and meat from the animals that are not slaughtered in the name of Allah. Only fish can be eaten without being slaughtered. Even though the list of meats from forbidden animals is long, there is only a special lesson about the ban on pork. It is said that a healthy human nature avoids pork meat and feels disgust and aversion to it. It is known that the favourite food of these animals is dung of all kinds and their favourite place to be is mud. Modern medicine has found that this meat is harmful in every way. Scientific analysis has determined that pork meat is a transmitter of deadly trichina larvae and other parasitic diseases. Even today this disease claims many lives. A large number of non-Muslim countries, have adopted and applied the recommendation of modern medical science, which warns of the danger of pork and pork fat in food items.

²²⁸ Arabic word, which means love. It is the most convenient way of meeting between the youth. (Ibid., p.102)

²²⁹ ”Musliman se ne moze zeniti nevjernicom niti mnogoboskinjom, niti se muslimanka moze udati za nemuslimana, za osobu koja nije Uzvisenog Allaha, ili je mnogobozac.” (Ibid., p.105)

²³⁰ Ibid., pp.102-106

Today is almost impossible to find pork on the menu in any better hotel or restaurant in bigger European cities. Research also shows that the use of pork meat affects the mental health of human beings as well as the extinction of some vital senses. It is not ruled out that science will very soon reveal new secrets of this ban and throw light on its sound foundation.

That pork is forbidden by Islam, is not a problem, but to use words such as disgust and aversion is totally unnecessary. The second problem is that the authors refer to medicine, scientific analysis and make several other claims, none of which are supported by any reliable sources and references.

There is also great emphasis on the importance of brotherhood for all Muslims. Already on the page 7, it says that "All Muslims in the world constitute one brotherhood by faith."²³¹ We find it likewise in the chapter 31, which talks about Islam and the contemporary world, but also about the future of Islam. In the first part of this chapter, the emphasis is on the suffering and injustice of the Muslim world. The chapter mentions the problems of the Palestinian people, the bad position of Indian Muslims in Kashmir, and also in Ceylon and Nepal. The war in Chechnya is one of the wars directed against the Muslim countries of the former Soviet Union. Some countries conduct an open planned campaign of assimilation of Muslims, this happened, for instance, in Bulgaria. The authors feel that such a situation should encourage all Muslim countries to organize mutually and achieve unity.²³²

On the other side, Muslims are being accused of fundamentalism and terrorism. When a Muslim executes terrorist attack it gets a religious interpretation, but if non-Muslim does the same, the act is being ignored and is not associated with the religion of the perpetrator. In this way, many Islamic countries today are faced with blackmail. In order to become a member of the United Nations they must, at least tacitly, renounce *jihad*²³³ as an organized form of promoting general Muslim interests. The authors think that the causes of this attitude towards Muslims should be sought, primarily, in Muslims' own weaknesses and alienation from Islam. To avoid this, Muslims should return to Islam, while non-Muslims should get to know Islam. Only like this, the world would enter into a more peaceful and happier future.²³⁴

²³¹ "Svi muslimani svijeta, sacinjavaju bratstvo po vjeri."

²³² Sulejmanovic., Kapetanovic., (2005:196)

²³³ The literal meaning of Jihad is struggle or effort, and it means much more than holy war. Muslims use the word Jihad to describe three different kinds of struggle: 1. A believer's internal struggle to live out the Muslim faith as well as possible, 2. The struggle to build a good Muslim society and 3. Holy war: the struggle to defend Islam, with force if necessary. Many modern writers claim that the main meaning of Jihad is the internal spiritual struggle, and this is accepted by many Muslims. -

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/beliefs/jihad_1.shtml

²³⁴ Sulejmanovic., Kapetanovic., (2005:196-197)

From this, one can get the impression that the authors dedicated more attention to the fact that terrorist attack executed by a Muslim gets a religious interpretation, while the act is being ignored and is not associated with religion if it is done by a non-Muslim, than to the fact that a terrorist act is something that should be condemned regardless of who committed the act. I don't want to go into whether this is fair or unfair, true or false, but the fact is that this is a religious education textbook, which is supposed to encourage interfaith tolerance and understanding of others.

The last part of chapter 31 is about the future of Islam. The authors are saying that the interest for Islam is evident and increasing in many parts of the world. Many Islamic countries, such as Iran, Pakistan and Sudan, have shown an open desire of returning to the original Islam, by introducing Sharia law. Aspirations like these can be felt today in Algeria, Turkey and other countries with majority Islamic population. An increasing number of Muslims in Europe and USA are committed to protect their religious identity and tradition, by building a large number of mosques and Islamic centres, in parts of the world dominated by Christianity. Many scientists believe that the future human civilization belongs to the black people. Islam has gained a lot of supporters from that race.²³⁵ Again we encounter assertion claiming scientific grounds, but without sources, the name of the scientists in question and references. Further, it says that Muslims have successfully resisted the efforts of secularization of the Islamic world, and attempts to impose on it so-called worldly-law. In this way, Islam would be reduced only to a "personal matter of every individual" and this would eliminate its impact on social events.²³⁶ Describing the situation of Muslims in the world, one can get the impression that the authors see secularization as a negative thing and that introducing of Sharia law could be desirable in FBiH as well, since the majority of population here are Muslims. This however is not explicitly said, but it could be interpreted this way from the context.

In the end it says that today it is unnecessary to point out the daily increasing number of converts to Islam. Among those, there are many prominent figures who found meaning in their life through Islam. The times we live in open up great opportunities and perspectives for the expansion of Islam. In the end, the authors conclude that they are sure that only Islam, living, universal, and open to all, as it was in the beginning, can lead mankind to a bright and secure future.²³⁷ Again there are no references as to who those prominent figures are.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid. pp. 197-198

Islam is a monotheistic religion and therefore has a legitimate right to claim that it is the only true religion. The same applies to the other monotheistic religion. However, in the context of BiH, this can be problematic, since there are three monotheistic religions present. When each of them claims that it is the only true religion, and at the same time indirectly denies the claims of the other two, this could create problems in a society where interfaith tolerance is quiet low after the last war.

Textbook for Orthodox religious education

The textbook for Orthodox religious education for the eighth grade is strictly of confessional character. The textbook is divided into 23 chapters. The textbook is going more deeply into the Orthodox Christian faith: about the church in general, the origin of the world, immortality of the soul, about God, the purpose and characteristics of the church, life after death, Judgement Day, the resurrection of the dead, about various sects and eternal life.

There is very little information about the others. Chapter 10, for instance, is about fatalism. It is said that fatalism or believing in destiny is present in Arab religion, Greek mythology, philosophy, in the Hindu religions and especially the Chinese, but also others.

Only in Judaism and Christianity, is God understood as free and omniscient, while man is understood as a free being who voluntarily decides to enter into communion with God, and in that way overcomes his transience and mortality.²³⁸

However, there are also certain "others" we should particularly guard ourselves against. These are different sects, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Satan, Adventists and Pentecostals. The goal of these sects is twofold: the destruction of individuals and families, and in that way even of society as a whole.²³⁹

The textbook is written from the point of having the only and complete truth, as we have seen from the example of the Islamic textbook. For instance, it says that "...we, who are baptized into the Orthodox Church, acknowledge and affirm that our Church is the organic and historical continuation of the original community born by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles."²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Stojanovic, (2005:24)

²³⁹ Ibid., p.40

²⁴⁰ "...mi krsteni, u pravoslavnoj crkvi, priznajemo i tvrdimo da je nasa Crkva organski i istorijski nastavak one prvobitne zajednice rodjene silaskom Svetog Duha na apostole." – Ibid., p.5

Textbook for Catholic religious teaching

The textbook for eighth grade is divided into 7 chapters and gives a very interesting and comprehensive view on Catholicism. Everything is put in the context of the modern world and its problems and challenges. The emphasis is on the need for dialogue, tolerance and understanding.

This can be seen from the following example, on the page 12, in the lesson "Life in the group" where it says that friendly communities are of great importance in order to learn how to be a friend. In those communities one learns to speak openly, accepting diversity and expressing feelings and thoughts.

Further, chapter II is about man's search for the living God. Here it is said that the development of the religiosity depends significantly of the impact of the environment. It can point you toward a particular religion or even deny it. All religions have some common features. Even though man is free to choose religion, he usually belongs to that religious community in which he was raised. However, Christianity is much more than a religion. It is a faith, which means trust in God by receiving his revelation, and a personal commitment to Jesus Christ in our own lives.²⁴¹

The textbook condemns fanaticism and fanatics since they are harmful for the true faith. It also condemns superstition and magic.

Atheism during the communist regime is portrayed as a disastrous period, when we had neither culture, nor religion, nor a good upbringing. All traditional values of culture and ethics were destroyed. Atheism, as a way of life, reaches into life through a new ideology and worldview, which glorifies only man and his powers. Therefore, atheism is absolutely unacceptable from the standpoint of religion, especially if it is imposed by force, like it was and like it still is in many communist countries.²⁴²

There are also many new religious movements who want to abolish old beliefs, traditions and customs. These are New Age, Scientology, esotericism and occultism, the Unification Church, the children of God, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as Hinduism and Buddhism. It is stressed that salvation is not possible through those religions and movements, but only through Jesus Christ, who redeemed us by the death on the cross and the Resurrection.²⁴³

²⁴¹ Peris, (2007:32-34)

²⁴² Ibid., pp. 38-40

²⁴³ Ibid., pp. 41-49

At the end of the textbook it is said that we have our share of responsibility for living a righteous life in society. Since we live with other people, we cannot seek only our own rights, we should also promote the rights of others. Common life is possible only when we respect each other, if we keep them equal to ourselves, and if we promote equality, justice and peace among the people. We are all God's children and we should live as brothers and sisters, regardless of skin colour, nationality, religion, financial status or social position.²⁴⁴ There is an example on page 134, in chapter V "In Jesus Christ, we get to know the true God". Here it says that Jesus did not distinguish people into desirable and undesirable, into friends and enemies, nor did he differentiate them by religion, nationality, social or material status. At the end of the textbook, it says that human history is marked by the continuous conflicts between peoples and nations. Millions of innocent people have lost their lives in brutal wars and bloodshed. Peace cannot be achieved by weapons, but through justice, respect for others and respect for somebody else's property. The final message in the textbook is that the strongest weapon in the struggle for peace is love, which is at the same time also the foundation of the Christian message.²⁴⁵

Chapter IV, "The Catholic Church and Christianity among the Croats" is about the roots of Christianity in the Croatian areas, the conversion of the Croats and their entry into the community of Christian peoples, about the social and religious life of Croats in the Middle Ages, their role as a bulwark of Christianity, the inter-war period, the destruction of the Church during communism, about the process of building peace and democracy and about the Catholic Church and the Croats outside the homeland.

The period of Turkish occupation is described as a struggle against foreign rule, a struggle in order to preserve cultural, ethnic and religious values. Although Islamic laws have been somewhat tolerant of the Christian faith, Christians in the Ottoman Empire were still second-class citizens. Because of this, the Catholics of Eastern BiH saw their salvation in the transition to Orthodoxy, which in comparison to Catholicism had a privileged position. Further, according to the textbook, it is said that in the early eighteenth century a forceful Islamization of Bosnia, Slavonia and Srem began. Many Catholics converted to Islam, and in this way the percentage of Catholics in the total population became sharply reduced. The conclusion of this lesson is that the Catholic faith was persecuted, while Catholic religious life was very difficult during the Turkish occupation. However, many Catholics

²⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 174

²⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 174-176

have withstood all the pressures and preserved their religious and national identity. Through their difficult struggle for their own survival, the Croats prevented further penetration of Turks into Europe.²⁴⁶

The activity of the Catholic Church in the period of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was considerably impeded, because the Orthodox Church was privileged and almost enjoyed the status of a state Church. Catholics were in a subordinated position and they were prevented from advancing in the public services.²⁴⁷

At the same time, the activities of the Catholic Church in Croatia during the Second World War are described as a struggle against two totalitarian and anti-Christian systems: Nazism and Communism²⁴⁸. National, racial and religious discrimination by the Ustasha regime of the “Independent Croatian State”²⁴⁹ was attributed to the pressure of German and Italian fascists.²⁵⁰

On the other hand, nothing is mentioned about the connection between the Catholic Church and the Ustasha regime. Neither is there any mention of the genocide against Serbs, Muslims, Jews and Gypsies by the Ustasha regime.

The end of chapter IV describes the most recent history of the Catholic Church, which was marked by a bloody and imposed war, by great Serbian aggression. The Church today feels that its job is to heal the war wounds and to encourage the construction of a just and lasting peace in the region. It particularly wishes to contribute to the creation of moral values. Without those it would be difficult to imagine the harmonious and complete development of a democratic society.²⁵¹

What is problematic in chapter IV, is the fact that both concerning religion and nationality the pupils are learning more about Croatia than about BiH, the country they actually live in.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., pp.96-98

²⁴⁷ Ibid., p.104

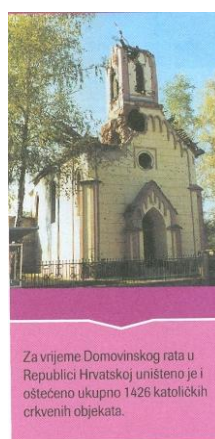
²⁴⁸ ”Uspostavom komunističke vladavine 1945. nasupilo je vrijeme borbenog ateizma i progona Crkve. Ubijeni su, zatvarani i progonjeni mnogi svećenici i vjernici. Onemogućen je ili u nekim slučajevima potpuno zabranjen rad poznatih katoličkih škola. Obustavljeno je izlazenje vjerskih knjiga, časopisa i novina... Vjernici, posebno oni koji su radili u državnim službama, živjeli su pod stalnim pritiskom. Bilo im je onemogućeno zauzimanje vodećih položaja u prosvjeti, vojsci, politici, medijama.” – Ibid., p.106

²⁴⁹ Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (NDH)

²⁵⁰ ”Očekivanja hrvatskog naroda da će stvaranjem Nezavisne Države Hrvatske (1941.) živjeti u slobodnoj i samostalnoj državi brzo su se iznevjerila. Nakon što se odrekao dijela hrvatskog nacionalnog teritorija, državni je režim pod pritiskom njemačkih i talijanskih vlasti počeo provoditi politiku nacionalne, rasne, vjerske i ideološke diskriminacije.” – Peris, (2005:105)

²⁵¹ Ibid., pp.109-110

There are lots of pictures of churches in different Croatian cities and pictures of Croatian flags. The example of two of the pictures can be seen under this paragraph. The picture bellow, to the left, shows the monument of the Croatian martyrs who were innocently killed during the World War II. The picture bellow, to the right, shows a destroyed church with following text bellow “During the last war in Croatia, a total of 1426 Catholic churches were destroyed and damaged.” There is also information about the religious affiliation of the population in Croatia, and not in BiH for instance. There is also various facts about the Croatian War of Independence. All this gives an impression that pupils are encouraged to think of them selves, not as Bosnian Croats, but as Croats, and to feel Croatia more as a homeland than BiH.



Based on this analysis we can say in short that the textbooks for Islamic religious teaching are purely confessional. The emphasis is firstly on the relationship and respecting the other Muslims. However, there is some information about other religions, Judaism and Christianity. This was confirmed by one of the teachers I had contact with. Nevertheless, this information about the other religions is written from the position of possessing the one and complete truth, where Islam is described as a perfect religion compared to the others. The confessional character is even more expressed in the textbooks for Orthodox religious education, but the focus is also national. The emphasis is on the Orthodox understanding of Christianity. Orthodox Christianity is here as well described as a perfect religion compared to others. Unlike the textbooks for Islamic and Catholic religious education, which teach about other religions, the Orthodox textbooks do not contain anything at all about other religions, beside some negative remarks about fatalism and sects, which we have seen in the textbook for the eighth grade. This was confirmed to me by a female teacher from Foca, in RS. The textbooks for Orthodox religious education should contain more information about

religion in general, but also about other world religions, especially about Catholicism and Islam, since Bosniaks and Croats are also constituent people in BiH.

The context of textbooks for Catholic religious teaching is primarily confessional, but it is important to say that the textbooks give a quite interesting and universal view of Christianity and religion in general. Everything is put in the context of the modern world, its problems and its challenges. The accent is always on the need for dialogue and tolerance.

One female teacher who lives in Sarajevo, a Bosnian Croat, confirmed that in the textbook for the fifth grade, there are lessons about the religion of the ancient peoples and about the great monotheistic religions, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. But also other world religions are mentioned. Besides the basic information about other religions, there is also a lesson about religious life of Jews, Muslims and members of other religions.

It can be said that the textbooks for Catholic religious teaching are written in a fairly open and critical mind. However, some controversial periods in the history of Catholic Church are left out, as we have seen, and national history is presented as continual agony and struggle for national and religious freedom.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

There has been an evident process of return of religion in the last two decades, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. From the "invisible" private sphere into the "visible" public sphere. In other words, this de-privatization of religion, and at the same time revitalization of religion, is present in BiH first of all as a "de-secularization" of public space and public life. All relevant signs demonstrate a significant flourishing of the role and place that religion has in Bosnian and Herzegovinian society. There has been increasing participation in religious activities and the accent is put on religious belonging. Religious communities are present in both political and public life as well as in the media. Last but not least, the religious communities play a great role in the educational system.

Through my research and analysis of the religious textbooks it became clear that the religious communities in BiH support segregation and divisions along ethnic lines through religious education. Religious classes are primarily used as a tool for national identification. In this way the children are victims of national indoctrination. This is evident through the identification of each group with its own "mother state". Both Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs are turning towards what they see as their own mother countries, i.e. Croatia and Serbia. Since Bosnian Muslims or Bosniaks do not have any mother country, they are gathered in one single community, which is called *ummet*, where all Muslims of the world constitute one brotherhood of the faith. It can be concluded that Muslims should feel that they have more in common with, for instance, Muslims from Sudan and Indonesia, than with their Christian neighbours. However, it is important to mention that only Bosniaks are experiencing BiH as their homeland, and this is evident in the textbooks for Islamic religious teaching.

This kind of segregation confirms the statement of Besim Spahic, the professor of Faculty of political science in Sarajevo. According to him, "we already have enough segregation in the schools because of religious teaching. We are already preparing the children for the breakup of this country, namely a breakup because of conflict on religious basis."²⁵²

Research has also shown that religious teaching discriminates minorities. This problem occurs in the schools where religious teaching is not offered to the pupils of all faiths. Most often there are only a few pupils of one religious group or there is a lack of teachers in that area.

²⁵² http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/tema_sedmice_vjeronauka_bih/24324337.html

Groups which are most damaged by this are the children of returnees, atheists and those who refuse to attend religious classes for other reasons.

Religious education burdens the children with non-adequate content, and, last but not least, it breaks the principle of secularism. Opponents of religious teaching think that this subject has no place in public schools and that these should instead concentrate on giving the pupils solid knowledge of language, mathematics, sciences, social sciences and history. The return of religion into the schools through religious education marked the return of the Church, as an institution, into the schools, which is not allowed in secular countries. In her book "Defining democracy", sociologist Marijana Radulovic, believes that an approach like this can lead to dangerous categorization along confessional and national lines, and thus lead to discrimination.²⁵³ It is inadmissible to violate everything that is secular in BiH, says Spahic.²⁵⁴

To take as an example the neighbouring country Montenegro, which is also multi-ethnic and multi-confessional like BiH: even though political elites made concessions to the Church many times, religious teaching did not succeed in capturing a place in the Montenegrin school system. It was simply mission impossible, partly because of the constitutional provisions of the secular state and its civic concept, and partly because of the deep divisions in society and harsh political polarization around the issue. Director of the Centre for Civic Education, Daliborka Uljarevic, agrees that religious teaching does not belong in the Montenegrin education system. She believes that by introducing religious teaching into the schools, Montenegrin society would be led backwards. "It would lead to the clericalization of society, and Montenegro is a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional country, which is going through a difficult period of transition which again is marked with struggle for basic human rights. Education reform has introduced the principle of democratic citizenship. We believe that this is an optimal solution", evaluates Uljarevic.²⁵⁵

Religious education as it is organized today, but also today's politics in general in BiH, are ultimately cementing already deep-rooted ethnic division. In the case of Bosnia, "political parties" are synonym with "religious parties". It is evident that each side aims to create their own nation, and religion is what separates them. According to Zdravko Grebo, professor at the Faculty of Law in Sarajevo, the Serbs, represented by Milorad Dodik, threaten quite often with secession. Croats are expecting final recognition of the so-called "third entity", with *de*

²⁵³ <http://magazin.6yka.com/do/da,148>

²⁵⁴ http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/tema_sedmice_vjeronauka_bih/24324337.html

²⁵⁵ http://www.slobodnaevropa.org/content/tema_sedmice_vjeronauka_crna_gora/24324342.html

facto exists. The third group, Bosniaks or Bosnian-Muslims, are also calculating with some concepts that are looking towards Sandzak and Islamic-political concepts.²⁵⁶ This demonstrates the deep divisions in, and disintegration of Bosnian society, which is visible on all levels, from political life and territorial-administrational organization, to the division and disintegration in the school system and education in general.

Religious education in public schools, and religion in general should not be the source of the problem. It should rather be part of the solution, and help the children build their inter-religious competence and at the same time preserve their identity. To solve the problems there should be intensive cooperation and a strong partnership between the authorities and religious communities. Otherwise we should be worried for the future of our children.

²⁵⁶ <http://www.6yka.com/bosna-na-vjetakim-pluima->

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